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Secret Machinations,

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Secret Machinations,

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

SARAH ANN HOOK,

AUTHOR OF THE WIDOWED BRIDE; OR, CELINA.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In ev'ry work, regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend:
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

VOL. II.

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Secret Machinations.

CHAP. I.

LORD Stellor then walked all through the town of Manfredonia, inquiring of every person he met if they had seen such ladies: from each he received a negative. He then returned; and again sent three of his servants off, each a different road, and he with Zelo pursued a fourth road, in hopes of gaining some intelligence.

When Prince Gareci, agreeable to the invitation, arrived, he was concerned to hear the account of the ladies' elopement, and was much shocked at the apathy with which Obreskoff re-

lated it. He felt for the distress of Lord Stellor, for Obreskoff did not suppress any circumstance; Lord Stellor's virtues and his own vices he alike painted in glowing colours; he only aimed at giving them false appearances. The one he set forth as shocking weakness; the other, as fashionable indulgences, and such as no man, who wished to distinguish himself in life, could avoid. The prince, not wishing to enter into an argument on the subject, did not give his opinion, but contented himself by observing,—"that custom in many countries tolerated practices, which the religion of the country strictly forbids." The day passed but half enjoyed by the prince; he felt the absence of Lord Stellor in a strong degree, and he took his leave early in the evening. The morning came, but Lord Stellor did not return. Alone, Obreskoff could not exist; to

the fate of Theresa he was indifferent, therefore he determined to go in pursuit of new adventures; in a few minutes he settled all his domestic concerns, and left Manfredonia.

Lord Stellor travelled three days in the greatest anxiety; he took little food, and less rest. Fatigue and distress of mind overpowered a constitution delicate, though good; the lively tints of health fled from his cheek; and his hair, of a beautiful colour, between flaxen and auburn, shaded his pale forehead with short luxuriant curls, and gave a cast of deep, tender sorrow to his countenance. His large blue eyes, in which was seen more interesting softness than manly fire, were languid and dull; nor did his long eye lashes, which usually gave a tender expression to his eyes, do more than shade them from view; his form, whose symmetry possessed all the soft turns of

Adonis, sunk. He fell from his horse. Zelo, who had observed the weakness stealing on his lord, was at his side, caught him ere he had reached the ground, and carried him to the shade, unable to move. Zelo left him, and rode with all speed to procure some sort of conveyance. Nothing better than a carretta, drawn by buffalos, could be got to Manfredonia. He sent a man on his horse to order the carriage to meet them without delay; and he attended slowly by the side of his lordship until the carriage met them. By the time they reached Manfredonia, Lord Stellor was insensible to all that passed; and the apothecary expressed great fears for his recovery. His fits of delirium were long and violent; his calls for Imma were continued and piercing. Prince Gareci could not leave Manfredonia until Lord Stellor's return, as he was anxious to know if he had discovered

vered the ladies; he also felt a friendly solicitude for his happiness. When he saw him in that piteous state, his heart was pained; he sat hours by his bedside, commiserating his sufferings, and suffering himself, being unable to alleviate his. Three days did Lord Stellor lay in alternate fits of delirium and stupor: Prince Gareci watching, with painful emotions, the dreadful and melancholy transition from fits of the most violent ravings to a death-like stupor.

When Lord Linton and Sir George Philomath entered the chamber, Lord Stellor's countenance had all the pale, hollow marks of death; his breathings were not heard, nor the least signs of animation, except a faint, slow pulse: The chamber was still and silent, as the sacred mausoleum of the dead. Prince Gareci and Zelo, on each side the bed, mutually watching the workings of the disorder, marking, with

wonder, the absolute power of the mind over the body.

Lord Linton, unprepared to find his friend in the apparent arms of death, sunk on a chair. The disgust his conduct had given, the severe things he intended to say, stifled from his mind; pity swelled his heart, and the cruel seducer of innocence was lost in the suffering friend of his soul.

Lord Linton was roused by the entrance of Gregory, who exclaimed, "Imma is not here, my lord! O, Sir George, Imma is run away, and the servants know not where! She has been gone many days."

"And," said Lord Linton, sighing deeply, "are you sure? Have you proof of the fatal truth?—And do I behold, in the companion of my infancy and youth, the despoiler of female innocence! Could the friend, whom my heart has acknowledged for years as its

greatest

greatest favourite, be guilty of so black a crime? Oh, lost, depraved Felix! how hast thou subverted the end for which thou wast created! The noble character of man is sunk, obliterated by the vilest of all actions. And is my companion, my friend, my brother, so lost to every sense of religion and honour! And has he trampled on every social duty! What animal but man is there in the creation that thus destroys his own species? And that the friend of my soul, the only friend of my youth, should act thus, is my greatest affliction. If man opposes his arts, his tricks to man, the contest is equal; but when lovely, soft, easy, believing woman is the object marked out as his prey, the conquest is cruel and inglorious! Man was ordained by his great Creator to love and cherish women. Does not nature instinctively direct her to fly to man for protection? Then,

where is the boasted glory of treacherously deceiving and conquering her, who flies to our arms for protection? Oh, my Felix! who has contaminated your principles? Whence this depravity?"

As he spoke this last sentence, he approached the bed, and took Lord Stellor's hand; the deadly coldness chilled him; he started; dropped the hand, and exclaimed, "He is dead!" Gregory, who, during Lord Linton's apostrophy had fell on his knees at the foot of the bed, and prayed with fervency for the restoration of Imma, started up, "God forbid, my lord! I would not for the world he should die with so great a sin on his head. Is there no help for him? Shall I go for some!"

"My friend," said Prince Gareci, who till now had had no opportunity of speaking, "all the medical assistance that Manfredonia affords has been called

called in. I have watched the greatest part of the last three days by the bedside of this unhappy man: he is worthy your care and tenderness."

"Worthy!" returned Gregory, "I fear not!"

"You see," my lord," resumed the prince, "that I am instinctively attached to your friend. I met him on the day I arrived here from Venice: I mentioned your name: it was a passport to his heart, and, but for this unhappy malady, we should have been sworn friends long ere this."

"I have many apologies to make for my inattention to you on entering the room; my anxiety for my friend must plead my excuse. Can you, prince, inform me the cause of the dreadful state he is in?"

"The flight of the lady you so sincerely lament."

"Have you seen her?"

"No: she fled on the day his lordship dined with me, which was the day after I arrived: no traces has she left. It is not to be discovered by which road she went, or in what conveyance: every possible search has been made to no effect."

Lord Linton then made many inquiries of Zelo concerning Imma; and the means used to get her from Amalfi: to all he answered with a shrug.

Sir George saw with concern the torpid state in which Lord Stellor lay, and heard with pain an account of his ravings; but he was a man of method, and, except when over head and ears in coins and manuscripts, he never omitted that which ought to be done.

"It will be right, my lord," said Sir George, "to write to the earl, and inform him that we have found his son, though we cannot give him the least account of his actions. I will

will withdraw, and write to him immediately."

Lord Linton remained by the bedside, and West, with a heart full of grief, took Zelo's place. The return of a delirium struck them with horror; the wild, incoherent ravings and painful groans pierced their hearts, and the piteous voice in which he called for Imma, wrung their feelings. During this fit of frenzy, Sir George entered with the letter he had written to the earl."

"Read, my lord," said he; "then send it to me, for I cannot bear to hear and see scenes so dreadful."

His lordship read the following letter aloud to the prince and Gregory:

"At length, my dear earl, our indefatigable eviscerate has been blessed with success—your son is found, after a journey of many days, elongated by false accounts. The joy we felt when

we discovered his habitation, was instantly obnubelated on seeing him laid on his bed, in an effraiable state of obmutescence; in fact, every sense and power is suspended. This torpid state is succeeded by the most effraiable frenzies, and this has been his situation, I find, for these three days past. Imma has left him: her flight is the cause of his being in this state of ademption.

"How he got her, and how she fled, we have yet to learn. Here are four stout fustilarians he took from Naples to assist him; from them we can get nothing but shrugs; they are obstinately elinquid.

"I trust the physician will soon administer a nepeuthe; he is expected here every minute. That he administers a proper febrifuge, I shall have antopical proof. Rely on Linton and myself; nothing shall be omitted; no care or tenderness wanting to produce a state

a state of convalescence; but Imma is all his cry, and I fear that nothing but Imma can do it; and where shall we find her?

"Believe me, my dear earl, had I not had an irrefragable proof of his crime, which I fear nothing can elute, I could not have believed that Lord Stellor had so well studied thelyphthora, and in the first attempt to have carried off his prize. How or where the lovely Imma is, I wish to know, for she must yet be innocent, however defiled by your son. Should she reach England, I trust you will receive her, not as the lewd administer to your son's pleasures, but as the innocent, lovely Imma of Amalfi, you so much admired, and have so often with pleasure talked of to,

"My dear earl,

"Your sincerely affectionate

"GEORGE PHILOMATH."

Five

Five days longer did the fits of delirium and stupor succeed each other; on the sixth day, after various severe applications, the fever abated, and he recovered some degree of reason. The prince was by his side. After some kind inquiries, he cautiously asked him if he should like to see his old friend, Lord Linton.

"Ah, poor Frederic! His friendship I have forfeited: I have treated him unworthily."

"Enough!" said the prince, "a fault acknowledged is half forgiven; rely on his generous disposition for the rest: will you see him now?"

"Now! Is he here? O, I cannot: he will not be kind."

"Be at ease: his love sought you; his friendship will comfort and support you."

"Ah! it will——but, Oh, my Imma!"

He

He then sunk into a state of insensibility for some time. Lord Linton was affected, and went near the bed. Lord Stellor opened his eyes, and sighed deeply.

"Oh, my Felix!" said Lord Linton, pressing his hand, "friendship bleeds to see you thus."

"Frederic, you are too good, thus to forgive me."

He again fainted. The physician discovered that the fever was not the cause, but the effect of his disorder; and until the cause was removed he hoped but little; mild and tender soothings do much; fiction, he said, was warrantable, if any account could be built on fiction to convey peace to his mind.

How is the soul of friendship wounded, tortured, racked, when situated as Lord Linton was! How strong the demand of humanity! How feeble the effects

effects of every effort! The energies of mind, soul, and body, were called forth to save a dear, erring youth.

The fabricated tale of Imma's safety was forcibly extorted from Gregory. The worthy young man, after much reasoning on the point with Lord Linton and Sir George, laid it among the number of pious falsehoods authorized by his church; and, after greeting Lord Stellor in his holy way, told a fair tale of Imma's safe arrival at Amalfi, and by her directions he came to assure him of it; and led Lord Linton to him.

This tale was balm to his soul, and an anodyne to his aching heart and mind. Many questions did he attempt to ask concerning her, till forbid by the physician. To know that Imma was safe, no pleasure could equal; to be told so by Gregory, sent by her, was a proof that she had generously

pleaded

pleaded his cause; and kindly declared the extent of the injuries he had done her. These soft consolations floated on his mind, and calmed the tumult in his brain. His pulse dropped; his blood circulated more regular, and in forty hours the physician pronounced him free from disorder, but in so debilitated a state as to be unable to lift a small cup to his mouth.

Sir George, whatever his professions were, attended not in the sick chamber. West was the responsible nurse as to the regimen laid down by the physician. Lord Linton, the Prince, and Gregory, cheered the gloom which hung round the invalid, at least three parts of each day; but all mention of Imma was carefully avoided. Two or three times did the suffering lover attempt to bring her the subject of discourse, when Lord Linton kindly said, "At a future time, my friend, Imma shall

shall be the subject of our conversation."

Sir George found in Prince Gareci a companion, who, though his passion for antiques and ancient parchments, whose contents were half obliterated, was by no means so great as his own, would politely enter into his pursuits, and would at times endeavour to correct them; for he saw with what facility the many pretended dealers in antiques, of various sorts, gems, paintings, sculpture, and manuscripts, could take large sums from his pocket; and so well satisfied was Sir George with his own unerring judgment, that he insisted no man could deceive him, nor could a modern intaglio be passed on him for ancient, though his friends all believed that he was not in possession of one that was not ten years before a rough stone.

Prince Gareci was about thirty-seven years

years of age, a fair complexion; his person and manners elegant; much vivacity in his conversation, blended with modesty and deference, yet at times a sombre cast shaded the whole, which insensibly interested all who conversed with him.

Lord Stellor was pronounced out of danger, but his strength returned slowly; therefore, at Manfredonia he was advised to stay for some time; and Sir George, understanding that Prince Gareci was going to visit his estate at Matera, he offered to accompany him: the oysters of Brundusium still excited his desire. The prince expressed much pleasure at the proposal.

Lord Linton paid the demands of the four Lazaroni, and sent them back to Naples. He first interrogated them as to the manner of their getting Imma, and his lordship's behaviour to her; to each question they shrugged their shoulders,

shoulders, put the fore finger of their left hand to their lips, and their right hand on their heart, bowed their heads; then said, "To our employers we are faithful!" His lordship could but admire this mark of honour and fidelity in men so unprincipled.

The abbot, in answer to Gregory's letter, which informed him of the certainty of Imma's life, and of her having been for weeks in Lord Stellor's power, also of her flight, directed him to continue his search for the fair fugitive. Lord Linton drew out a rout for him he thought as possible as any other, with advice to turn to any village on the slightest information which might give hopes. Gregory set off in the carriage Lord Stellor purchased at Portici, accompanied by James.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THERESA and Imma supported the fatigues of the voyage with great spirits, and the captain kindly, according to their desire, landed them at Comachio. When seated at the little inn, "What," said Imma, "my dear Theresa, are your intentions?"

"To travel with all convenient speed to some town a distance from Vienna, for I would not go too near, lest I should be known. I will from thence write to my uncle, and on him depend for every future comfort; he surely will not withhold the annual income arising from my father's property."

"And what will become of me?"

"If with me you can be happy, you shall share as my second self, whatever I may

I may possess. If to the good fathers and Metella you wish to return, we will by letter prepare them; but with me you will stay until that can be done."

"I can never again, my Theresa, face my dear friends at Amalfi; if there is a possibility of my having been guilty, they will fear me so, and a convent for life will be my doom. And how can I devote that heart to prayer and penance, which I have left at Manfredonia? For to Manfredonia have I been wafted each night in my dreams; have held long and delightful conversations with Lord Stellor. Last night I saw him stretched on his bed, breathing his last sigh; and he blest me with his last breath."

Such tender scenes at night filled her mind with similar ones the following day; and at the time she landed [illegible] to have deprived her of thinking

thinking on Lord Stellor, would have been to deprive her of life. Strange turns in nature! How shall it be accounted for? The only man she ever knew who she totally disregarded! The only man who ever drew a tear from her eye, or sigh of horror and pain from her heart, was now the only man her heart turned to. Lest my male readers should say, fickleness, strange fickleness, inherent in woman! I must inform them, that in Imma it was gratitude, pure gratitude: her young and innocent heart recoiled from the man who had forcibly torn her from her friends and all her earliest affections, nor did she feel he could do her a greater wrong; but the fate of poor Theresa convinced her how comparatively good and worthy this man was to the generality of his sex. And why this generous goodness? Because he scorned meanly to take an advantage

tage of the woman who was wholly in his power; and because that he would not, by any act of his, that the woman he adored should forfeit her own esteem; and for a thousand other causes, which none can describe or feel but those whose breasts are filled with pure love, sustained by sacred honour.

"And so, my Imma, you fear a cloistered life? Then I guess to what point your heart turns, nor do I wonder: with a man so good, so pure and amiable, you must be happy, and I dare pronounce you will."

The people of the inn procured them a carriage and two mules for their journey over the Tyrol to Linz, for which a certain sum was agreed on, and a part paid; the other part the driver was to receive at the end of the journey.

They set out in high spirits from Comachio, and to Imma every thing was

new;

new; the varying aspect of the country was a continual source of admiration, and, often at sun-set did she wish to trace the sublime scenes before her. The soft, dark shade of one hill, beautifully contrasted by the golden gleams which shot across another, while in the valleys arose the thick dews of evening, and spread before the eye an extensive lake. When they began to climb the delightful, majestic Tyrol, Imma was lost in ecstasy and gaze. On her right hand, her eye traced the spiring Alps, till lost in clouds; on the left, a deep dell, the declivity of which was thickly planted by nature with firs and underwood; the pines' lofty tops stretched half way to greet the traveller's eye, while his ear is struck by the hollow roaring of waters unseen, or only now and then has a transient view of its white foam as it furiously falls from rock to rock. Her ear was

next surprised by the melodious horn of the German post-boy, which was echoed from Alp to Alp, till it sweetly died away.

"Oh!" cried Imma, "are these the enchanting scenes of Nature? Here could I live—here could I ever gaze with rapture!"

On the road and at the inns the driver paid them every attention, and was always solicitous about their property: it was so small in appearance, it would hardly excite a wish of plunder in the breast of a villain. A small box contained their all; and the man's care and attention prevented those fears they would otherwise have entertained. He soon knew that in this little box Theresa deposited her cash, and he never failed to follow them with it under his arm, and place it in their room. At Mantua, Imma found food for her eyes; the situation of the town, the strongest

strongest of all strong fortifications she had ever seen, here presented themselves. The large body of water, which surrounded the town, gave her an idea of one built in the centre of a lake; the draw-bridge and port-cullis all were novelties.

Soon after they left Mantua they began to climb an extreme steep Alp, which began the Tyrol, and that evening saw the beautiful romantic Adige; on the next, they slept at a lovely little place, consisting of a few houses, situated on its banks, called Dolce. Before the house flowed this lovely, transparent river in uneven measures; now murmuring like a brook, then roaring like the furious sea. Behind, rose the towering Alps, in endless succession, half way up dressed with luxuriant verdure, which rendered the rugged, naked, ruthless tops more terrific.

"Ah!" thought Imma, as she viewed the wilds of finished nature, "what more can be wanting to render life happy? Felix!" sighed her heart, "Indeed," said she, in answer to its honest whisperings, "with Felix and a cottage at Dolce, the world could hold no other charm."

At Roveredo they were whimsically amused by the driver; he stopped to refresh his mules (of them he took no less care than of the ladies), and himself; after having fed them with bread, and given them water, he from his mouth spirted wine into their ears, "to give them," he said, "strength and spirits." Imma improved on the idea, and it was for some time a mirthful subject. At dirty Trent they were disgusted: in viewing the town they felt no pleasure. No sooner had they passed the gates than their ideas brightened, and they were lost in the roman-

tic

tic scene. Still the curling waves of the Adige played in their view, and they frequently crossed it before they reached Balzano. On the wall, which is a boundary to the Adige, which in some seasons swells to an enormous height, they walked; as it also forms the grand promenade of the town, they were enchanted with the prospects. Here Imma, to her great astonishment, saw a saw-pit, and the timber placed on it, but the saw appeared to be self-moved. "What!" exclaimed she, as she pressed Theresa's arm, "is this a supernatural work? I see no hand that guides it, nor force that compels the saw up and down: how can it be?"

A man, who attended the saw-pit, and was busily employed behind the building, came to them, and explained the mystery to the wondering Imma. That water, aided by a few simple rules

of mechanism, should have such power, was to her a matter of admiration. They then visited a vineyard, in the centre of which stood a pretty ball-room, decorated with a few chandeliers, and the portraits of the emperors Joseph and Leopold. At the upper end of the room the doors opened to a large balcony, over which the Alps frowned, awfully majestic. In their way from thence they visited the church: in the sacred spot assigned for the peaceful dead, their guide pointed out the tomb of his first wife, which was decorated with a variety of devices, rudely cut, but enough to shew she was of the Romish church. This man appeared to behold all human beings with a brotherly eye, told them, with great feeling, that the emperor had ordered that the Protestants and Catholics should mix their ashes together. "I hope," added he, "that it will be a means of promoting

promoting a friendship between them when living."

Balzano furnished them with conversation, until, still climbing, still mounting, they reached the summit of a very high Alp. Here description must drop. Scenery so enchanting, objects so romantic, bewilder the descriptive powers. The eye takes in beauties the mind cannot reflect and hold to view by a just description. Early on the tenth day from that they left Mantua, they arrived on the highest Alp. Here Imma, for the first time, complained of cold, though she was travelling under the influence of a July sun; yet the sharp air of the highest Alps chilled her blood, but not her energies. The source of her favourite river caught her eye; the immense torrent of water, bursting from the highest Alp, fed by eternal snows, was both terrific to the eye and ear; it fell

from Alp to Alp with an impetuosity and noise which deadened every other sound, and is joined in its course to the bed of the river by numberless other smaller, but perpetual torrents.

"And," said Imma, as she alighted from the carriage, "my lovely Adige, is this the last view I shall have of you? I adore thy pure waters for giving health, freshness, and beauty, to this charming country!"

The driver, seeing her so enraptured with the sparkling, foaming torrent, at a great risque caught a few drops in a cup they had among their travelling equipage.

"Here, signora, drink of your Adige."

"I will; but not with the same hope my country-women drink of the clytumreus."

The day after they lost the Adige, they were pleased with the beautiful Tarrento

Tarrento falling from the snowy bosoms of the Alps, which gave rise to the river Inn. By a long and gradual descent, and a beautiful road, they arrived at Inspruck, an imperial town, which was all bustle and gaiety, being full of soldiers in the imperial service. The wide spacious streets, well built houses, adorned on the outside with Fresco paintings, were new objects for Imma's attention, though many such are to be seen at Geneva, and other parts of Italy, but none in the small track. Imma had passed over near a league from Inspruck; the mountain Maxamillian demanded their attention. On the top, though an immense height, stands a garrison and prison, built by order of Maria Theresa, but now disused. From Inspruck their descent was rapid and dangerous, the carriage heavy, and the mules weak. Imma prevailed on Theresa to walk, though

in her state, heavy and weak also, it was a trial.

As they walked slowly down the descent, Theresa leaning on Imma's arm, they heard music at a distance, but the soft zephyrs bore it faithfully to their ears: not a note was lost. They stopped, listened, then walked on; at length they saw, sitting on a projecting rock, shaded with mountain ash, the musician. He touched the strings of a lute in mournful cadence; his figure was uncouth, but his sighs were deep, and his music touching.

"Here, ladies," said the muleteer, for he was standing by his side, "is a poor man, who deserves your pity."

"Yes, ladies," said the stranger, as he cast his eyes on them, then on the ground, "I am travelling to my family, which is many hundred miles from hence, and I have nothing to subsist on but the bounty of those I meet.

Many years have I been bound in the chains of slavery, and not long since set free, by the interposition of an angel. To my family I would fly, but, alas! my weak limbs, worn out by hardships, will hardly bear my body."

Imma was so affected by the accent and manner of the stranger, that it was with a trembling hand she opened her purse, and gave him two of the pieces of gold she had taken from Lord Stellor. She sighed when she recollected how she had procured them; but prayed they might prosper with the liberated slave.

"Imma," said Theresa, "I must give my mite. There, my friend, is mine: it is the widow's mite."

"A widow," said the man, "and a child yet unborn! The widow's mite may it prove! God preserve you, Signora! Imma, may your patron saint guard you!"

Imma shed a tear: Theresa sighed—they walked on. On their arrival at Kufstein Theresa found herself unwell, and proposed staying there a day and two nights; to which the muleteer readily agreed. On the first morning she found herself much better; and, that she would lose no means of recruiting her strength, which she knew quiet alone would do, after dinner, while Imma strayed through the woods, along the slopes, and sought for pretty pebbles on the shores of the Inn, Theresa sunk in the soft arms of Somnus.

Imma sauntered along, plucked one of every pretty leaf or flower she saw; sat on every inviting spot, watched the setting sun, and thought on Lord Stellor.

Thus she passed the time, and thus she wandered, until the grey clouds of evening warned her to return. She found her friend as much recovered by her

her rest, as she was envigorated by her walk.

They rose early in the morning in cheerful spirits. As they sat down to breakfast, Theresa desired the waiter to tell the muleteer they should be ready to set off in a few minutes.

"We have not seen him since yesterday afternoon," said the man.

"Not seen him!"

"No, madam: the ostler says, he has taken both the mules. He told him, he was going to have their shoes removed. When we found he stayed long, I told my mistress that I thought you had sent him on some errand, as I saw him come out of your apartment just before he set off."

"Saint Michael, defend me!" said Theresa.

"The carriage is left, madam, and you can have post-horses," said the waiter.

"Well,

"Well, it must be so," returned Theresa.

The bill was brought, and Inima prepared to pay it, when no money was to be found! The little box was emptied, but not a cruitzer there. Inima turned pale and trembled. Theresa fainted away. The kind hostess used every means in her power to restore suspended animation. At last she succeeded: every kind consolation the good woman could do, she did.

"Do not fret, my dear ladies, about the bill, the carriage is worth more; or, if you have any friends at or near the next post, you shall have horses, and the driver can bring back the money for both; or you are welcome to stay here until you have sent to your friends."

"I thank you," said Theresa, "but all my friends are far off: if you will detain the carriage for what I am indebted

debted to you, we will proceed as well as we can.

"Now, my Imma, to our strength must we trust: how long mine will support me, God knows."

The hostess expressed great concern that it was not in her power to lessen their difficulties. She assisted them in putting their wardrobe in a handkerchief, as being more portable than a box.

The lovely travellers left Kufstein with hearts oppressed and prospects gloomy. Two females travelling on foot, whose appearance was so much above the common, attracted the gaze of each passer, and covered their cheeks with confusion. They had walked but a few miles when Theresa was oppressed with fatigue, and they went some few yards out of the road to rest under the shade of a tree.

"Now," said Imma, smiling, for she

she seemed to have gained spirits by walking, "let us count our stock of cash, and then we may judge what sort of supper to order."

"Ah, my love!" replied Theresa, while the tears fell from her eyes, "few are the houses who will like to admit us, and those few, I fear, we shall not like to enter. A carriage, servants, and money, are the best recommendations on the road; our appearance will cause suspicion, and our tale will be seldom believed."

"What! not believe the truth? That is strange. Well, never mind, Theresa, we have a little money, keep up your spirits; if we cannot be entertained at the best inn, we will go to the worst; if the bed is clean, no matter how poor. See, I have two Roman ounces; and, Oh, how unfortunate! it was only yesterday, by your advice, that I put what little I had with your's,

except

except these few pieces, or we should have had plenty."

Theresa sighed—Imma danced, and warbled out a little Italian air.

"There, my Theresa, will that procure us a cruitzer at the next town, think you?"

"Ah, my lovely friend, you bear your troubles lightly! I carry about me a mark of shame and guilt, sufficient to weigh me to the ground, without pecuniary waits. Oh, my dear Imma! thy innocence supports thee. Did my conscience bear me testimony that I had not deviated from the path of rectitude, that I had not forgot my duty, I could like your smile, even in this depth of misery."

Theresa by the help of Imma's arm reached a village eight miles from Kufstein. A little humble cot, at the entrance of the village gave them shelter. Theresa was exhausted. Their genteel appearance,

appearance excited curiosity and respect, and their tale told by the half-smiling, half-weeping Imma, raised compassion in the hearts of her auditors. A cool sallad, bread, cheese, and wine, recruited their spirits; but when Theresa attempted to walk, so hurt and blistered were her feet, that it was impossible she could proceed. She yielded to the intreaties of Imma and the cottager to rest there till morning. Rest, and the old woman's applications, rendered her feet nearly sound; but the grief at her heart fed on her strength. The good woman's demand for their refreshments and bed was rather extravagant, considering on what homely viands they fed; their supper was not more luxuriant than their dinner, and bread, with new milk, was their breakfast.

Imma found that their two ounces were reduced full half, and also learned that

that it was full sixteen miles to Lauffen, and not a house at which they could get the least entertainment on the road. Theresa's heart sunk; she felt herself unequal to the journey. Imma, whose strength and spirits increased with their difficulties, urged Theresa to exert herself, and gaily chatted; warbled a lively air now and then in a solitary part of the road, in hopes of imparting some of her spirits, if not her tranquillity, to the breast of Theresa, but in vain.

By frequently resting, and frequent draughts from the lucid stream, Theresa was enabled to complete about ten miles, when she fell, and, Imma feared, to rise no more. Animation forsook her lovely form; her eyes closed; one sigh passed her lips,—no more.—Imma raised her head; called to her; wept over her,—no answer—no motion!

"Oh,

"Oh, thou hard of heart! didst thou behold the beautiful ruin thou hast made, the high-born, lovely Theresa, levelled with the dust, stretched on her parent earth a lifeless form, and by thy means, would a sigh of regret swell thy bosom? Would this scene of human misery, the work of thy deceit, awaken a principle in thy breast worthy the human heart? No. Oh, Obreskoff! why is the most perfect of human forms inhabited by the most infernal of spirits? Look down, great God! on this thy fallen servant; accept her penitence and contrition. As thou preserved her from an untimely death—so support her in this great trial. To thee, Holy Virgin! do I vow, in the name of this suffering sinner, that, for thy intercession with thy Blessed Son, she shall make a pilgrimage to Loretto, and there expiate her sins. Sainta Maria! my prayers

are

are heard—she lives again!" Thus did Imma, in the agony of her heart, apostrophize the brutal cause of all Theresa's sufferings; but soon did her heart, hanging with firm reliance on her God, offer up a sincere prayer to the throne of mercy.

Happy that youthful mind, who, in the depth of affliction, thus clings with faith to their God! Pure are their hearts, virtuous their education, orthodox and strong the principles of religion implanted in their minds.

As Theresa was reviving, Imma on her knees in a posture of supplication, two ladies turned into the road from a wood. They stood some time unobserved, and heard part of Imma's prayer; they then inquired the cause of so strange a sight.

"Ah," said Imma, "for the love of charity, say where can I get something to support my dying friend?"

"Go,"

"Go," said the eldest lady to the other, "and tell Zeolin and Amos to come, and bring some water and drops. Have you no carriage or servant?" asked the lady, as she stooped down to take Theresa's hand.

"No," said Imma, raising her head, and displaying two of the most brilliant black eyes in all Germany to a young man who stood behind the lady, "we have been robbed, madam."

"What!" said the young man, in hopes she would turn her eyes on him again, "have you been robbed of your carriage?"

"No, signore; of our mules and money."

"No more interrogations, William; but assist to lift this lady from the ground."

The young lady returned, and with her the servants. Theresa took some water and drops; then the two men took

took her in their arms, and carried her to the house, which stood three or four hundred yards from the road, deeply embosomed in a wood, or woody park, which hid it from the traveller's eye. Theresa was put to bed in a neat room, and the lady, observing that her situation demanded the tenderest care, directed the house-keeper to administer envigorating cordials, at stated times, and keep her chamber quiet.

Imma, when she saw her friend so charitably relieved, and so comfortably accommodated for the night, on her knees offered up her sincerest thanks to that power who influences Christian hearts to Christian deeds. She then partook of the refreshments set before her; then laid herself by the side of Theresa.

"I shall," said Imma, as they were rising, "leave our tale for you to tell. The lady, who has so kindly protected

us

us from every evil our situation had exposed us to, has a right to know the cause of that situation. My story may be plainly and simply told; it may appear romantic and incredible to some people, and therefore may draw on me the character of a deceiver; but I have no family, no friend, no name, but that of Imma, whom obloquy can affect, or whose honour through me can receive an injury: you, my Theresa, have much to hide for the honour of your noble friends."

Theresa wept, and lifted her lovely blue eyes to heaven; then sunk on her knees, and in mental prayer implored assistance, and that grace divine might inspire her tongue whenever her story should be required.

A servant brought them coffee; soon after the house-keeper appeared to make inquiries of their health, and how they had slept. To all Imma replied with thanks.

thanks. Theresa could only look gratitude through her tears. Some time after Madam Kenelm entered, her eyes beaming with tenderness, while in the softest accents she saluted them. After many inquiries how they had passed the night, she, tenderly pressing Theresa's hand, said:

"Now I must beg you will inform me, how I can serve you. I wish not to pry into your secrets; you may have some you would keep from me and from the world; but by what strange accident you were thrown into the situation I found you, pray inform me."

"From goodness like your's, nothing must be hid: those who can thus tenderly pity and commiserate the sufferings of the wretched, must possess feeling and generosity enough to listen with compassion to the recital of the frail wanderings of a poor deluded woman. Nothing will I conceal from

you but the name of my family, and that only in tenderness to them; they are too respectable for the world to know, that so guilty a thing as Theresa is related to them." Here she paused; a flood of tears relieved her swelling bosom. Madam Kenelm was much affected. Theresa then minutely related every incident of her life, from the first introduction of Obreskoff to her uncle, unto the moment her miseries laid her on the earth, near the mansion of the worthy Madam Kenelm.

Every passion which the relation of such villainies and such sufferings would naturally excite in a tender, virtuous breast, glowed in her's; and she kindly assured Theresa, she would be her friend.

"And," said she, "when a few days acquaintance shall prove to you how worthy I am of your confidence, you will perhaps accept of me as a mediator

diator between you and your uncle: but, your interesting companion,—how is her fate connected with your's?"

"The story of my friend, madam, I will relate with the same correctness and truth I have my own: it may appear a little romantic, but it is not less true."

"Well, well, that we will reserve for a tale after dinner: you must take the air, and we will have your friend's story in the arbour. I am a mother, and know the care necessary to those who are fast approaching to that state. Mr. Kenelm is gone from home for some weeks, and I make it a point never to see dinner-company in my husband's absence; my son is fond of company, for that reason he is seldom at home when his father is out—he and his preceptor dine out this day; my niece, who you saw yesterday, is gone for some time on a visit: we

will dine, and spend the afternoon together. Good morning! I shall send you some refreshment before dinner."

Such condescending goodness filled the hearts of the itinerant fair ones with gratitude and love. The time from then until dinner was announced was spent in repeating and admiring the amiable virtues of Madam Kenelm. After dinner they walked in the garden for some time, then took their seats in the arbour, when Madam Kenelm requested the performance of Theresa's promise. During Theresa's recital of Imma's adventures, Madam Kenelm watched the countenance of Imma with a penetrating eye; and she saw, by the blush which raised on her cheek, and the convulsive contraction which worked about her mouth, when her parting from Lord Stellor was described, what a tender interest he held in her heart.

"And,"

"And," said Madam Kenelm, "is this Lord Stellor still dear to you, although he has taken you from your friends, and thrown you a wanderer on the world?"

"I never had loved him, Madam, had he not torn me from my friends—the delicate tenderness with which he treated me, when I was in his power, and the limited use he made of his power, raised a gratitude in my heart which deserves the name of love."

"You fear a convent, you say!"

"Yes, Madam."

"Well, my ingenuous girl, cherish the idea of Lord Stellor, though he is very reprehensible for one act, yet his virtues over-balance it; and he will, I hope, one day or other, be rewarded with his little Italian."

Soon after, the servant appeared with coffee, followed by his young master, and the Abbé, his preceptor; a frown

of displeasure contracted the brow of Madam Kenelm, at the unexpected intrusion: Theresa and Imma rose to withdraw.

"No," said Madam Kenelm; "I beg you will not move—coffee is here."

They still stood, until requested by Madam Kenelm to sit. The quick, busy eye of Madam Kenelm, which rapidly ran over Theresa's person, then to Imma, confused her; but the unfeeling stare of the large grey eye of the Abbé, offended her.

Theresa, though soft and amiable in her disposition, had not lost the least degree of her native pride: when an unmerited, unmanly insult was offered her, the honest pride of a female German was roused; and by a dignity of look and manners, she contemptuously resented the affront.—The Abbé felt insulted by her cold repulsive looks, and

and the monosyllable answers she gave to his many impertinent questions; his pride was also wounded; but how different was the cause and resentment of wounded pride in their bosoms!

Theresa, carried her's no farther than to check insolence, and demand respect; the vindictive pride of Abbé Corbeau cried for revenge—malignant spirit!

Not the tall elegant form of just symmetry; each motion, dignity and grace; nor the fair beauties of her face, whose clear tratsparent skin displayed the small blue branches on her temples; on her cheek, the pale carnation had usurped the place of the fuller rose, and added a delicacy to the most delicate interesting countenance in the world! Not all these beauties of Theresa, which warm and soften the heart of man, could touch the chilled obdurate bosom of the Abbé. He was

treated with cold contempt by a woman who was lifted by the hand of charity from the earth, in a situation which warranted suspicion, and dare she, a mendicant, refuse him the information he chose to ask? No! not without feeling his power.

M. William Kenelm, inherited all his mother's softer virtues, blended with a manly vivacity; he had imbibed from the Abbé none of *his* unnatural principles. If he had instilled into his pupil's mind, any one sentiment worthy of man, it was not because his heart approved it, or his religion dictated it, but because he found it necessary, in order to hold his situation, in which he enjoyed benefit, ease, and pleasure, to wear a mask. He soon discovered that Madam Kenelm was a most exemplary character—that her son had been too long under her tuition not to have profited by her lessons, and his

his pure principles too firmly fixed to be easily perverted: he judged it would be much more to his benefit to play the hypocrite, than develope his real character; though, in many conversations and arguments he had held with Madam Kenelm, he had given her some reason to doubt its purity.

Soon after coffee, Madam Kenelm gave Theresa and Imma an opportunity of retiring, by observing to Theresa that she looked fatigued, and she advised early rest.

"Indeed, mother," said William, as soon as they had left the arbour, "they are two pretty women."

"Do you think so, my dear; but which do you think the handsomest?"

"I do not know—there is a great deal of life and vivacity in the black eyes of the Italian; her lips are coral, her teeth are ivory, and her form is perfect aerial; she glides along like something

supernatural. In the German lady—" "Lady," repeated the Abbé, with a sneer; "every feminine beauty is transparent; she is softness itself, and the languor so visible in her countenance and speech, is very interesting."

"Surely, sir, said the Abbé, "you have employed your time well, to have studied those women so accurately.—In my opinion, there appears a great deal of art and deceit about them. The lively little Italian is a finished coquet, if nothing worse; and the German cannot conceal, with all her false modesty, what she is."

"You form your opinions hastily, Monsieur Abbé," replied Madam Kenelm, "and harshly too; I have heard both their stories, and have every reason to believe, that however unfortunate they have been, they are deserving of my protection."

"What, Madam, do you mean to

protect them, and provide for the unborn fruit of Madam's licentiousness?"

"I mean to supply every want they may have, until I can happily restore them to their friends, from whom they have been strangely separated."

"Strangely, no doubt, Madam, and a strange story they have imposed on you; every word of it, I dare say, will prove false; but you will not be convinced how wrong it is to relieve beggars, and believe every tale they tell, until by some glaring imposition you will have cause to repent of being so (what you call) charitable."

"Why, Mons. Abbé," said William, "you cannot call these ladies beggars; have they not been robbed? Do they look like beggars?"

"O! my young friend, there are well dressed beggars, and well dressed sharpers; I must own I think it danger-

ous to lodge such people in the house; an out-house should be their portion."

"Mons. Abbé, I think I have penetration enough to discover a simple tale of truth from a varnished falsehood, and the pleasure it gives me to assist the helpless, outweighs every consideration."

"Ah! Madam, that is selfish; you had far better, and it would be a far more noble way of disposing of your money, to build and endow a convent."

"What! and make you abbot?"

"Yes, Madam, if you please—your name would be perpetuated in the history of your country, to the end of the world: It would be erecting a noble monument to your memory: it would be a glorious act!"

"In truth, Mons. Abbé, your ideas of charity and mine are very different. I had rather build a monument to my memory

memory in the hearts of my fellow-creatures, than give my money to support a lazy set of relignex. I am no friend to cloistered societies, and I think our good emperor never did a better thing than when he abolished some of the too many we have."

"Madam, I see you live but for yourself; to please yourself, is all your study; you think not how comfortable a retreat you might raise, which hundreds would enjoy long after your death, and in their enjoyment bless the founder of their happy abode."

"Your advice I will not take; the charity you recommend, I do not think such; and you may support your opinion with all the sophistry you are master of: but all the arguments you can adduce must be weak and refutable; nor shall your principles and opinions give a bias to my actions; and I will maintain that no real act of charity,

charity, or benevolent exertion can be selfish: how can that pleasure be selfish which is the consequence of a pleasure or happiness enjoyed by others? The glutton or epicure, I grant you, enjoys a selfish pleasure when they sit down to a table splendidly covered with rich viands and costly dishes; they eagerly pick and cut the best bits, and the fewer there are to partake of the feast, the better they are pleased. The miser, too, whose only happiness is counting over his golden store, and hugging his useless pelf, shut up from human eye, enjoys a selfish pleasure, and communicates to all around him only the idea of misery: misery sits on his countenance, and hangs on his garment; misery nestles in every cobweb in his chambers, and in all his pleasures misery is his companion. These characters, Mons. Abbé, enjoys none but selfish pleasures, and live without performing

forming a single duty, and disgrace human nature."

"You do not maen to say, Madam, that you feel no pleasure in all your charitable gifts, and that you perform these acts mechanically, because you think it your duty, as children, to repeat their prayers night and morning, without once thinking on the Being they address?"

"No, Mons. Abbé; did I not, in the beginning of our discourse, declare that I felt a pleasure in all I do; but it is increased or diminished according to the degree of comfort I communicate to the distressed; to say I felt no satisfaction in administering to the comfort of the afflicted, would be setting myself forth as an inconsisteut mortal, but I must own it is very much heightened by finding that my duties are pleasures, when to many they are hard tasks badly performed: and now, Mons. Abbé,

Abbé, you have to prove that that pleasure is selfish which is diffused over many."

"I insist that it is selfish, because if it did not gratify a prevalent passion, you would not give a cruitzer; nor do I think you are intitled to any degree of praise in doing that which alone gives you pleasure, and much may be said against it; at present, it may be but a foible, but if encouraged, may increase to a vice."

"Can that ever become a vice which gives birth to the most sublime and virtuous sentiment and gratitude?—Charity, if administered in time, often may preserve many from falling into vice; poverty and friendless distress, is, in my opinion, the greatest enemy to virtue. When I speak of virtue, I do not mean charity alone, for there are many virtues poverty may rob us of besides charity; and many a breast

amply

amply stored with every social and religious virtue, has, by the pressure of extreme and helpless distress, parted progressively with each (for none fall at once from one extreme to the other) until they find they are too far gone to retrieve themselves; nor can they hope that any one will exert their powers to extricate them, when not a hand was held out to them to save them from falling at the first. If these unfortunate ladies, who have caused you to inveigh so vehemently against charity——"

"Only against promiscuous charity, Madam, do I speak."

"If they should, through my means, be restored to their friends, and many worthy hearts made happy, shall I not have done a Christian good?"

"But how do you know that they are what they say they are, or that their friends will thank you for your trouble?"

"The

"The first of your doubts I shall soon be convinced of; as to the second, I shall receive my reward in their happiness."

"The object may be for ever lost, if cold prudence is to hold the hand of charity, while caution seeks to know its worth: it is, at all times, worth the risque, and better to relieve three unworthy characters than pass by one deserving object."

Their discourse was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger with letters from Madam Kenelm, giving an account of the dangerous illness of her sister, who anxiously desired to see her.

Madam Kenelm was affected at the news; and, as she had the sincerest affection for her husband, and all his family, she instantly prepared for her journey, sent for post-horses, took leave of her son, recommended Theresa and

Imma

Imma to the care of the house-keeper, with a note to be given to them in the morning, requesting them to stay until her return.

Soon after the departure of Madam Kenelm, William retired to his chamber, and the Abbé to his meditation.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THERESA and Imma had passed the night in sweet and gentle sleep, when a soft tap at the door before sun-rise awoke them. They asked who was there; when a note was pushed under the door, which a low voice desired them to read. Imma leaped from her bed and took the note; it was written in German: she gave it to Theresa, who to her astonishment read:

"SINCE you left the arbour, I have received such proofs of the vileness of your characters, and wicked fabrication of your stories, that I desire you will lose no time in leaving this house. I have ordered the abbé to conduct you to the bottom of the park, that I may

may no more converse with women who have deceived me, and disgraced their sex.

"KENELM."

Inima could not give credit to her ears, nor Theresa to her eyes. To be called from their bed, where they had enjoyed sleep the most refreshing and tranquil, to read accusations so false, traced by the hand of her, they the night before paid silent adoration to—of her, in whom they had hoped all their misfortunes would end, and all their future happiness arise. The stern command! how could they account for it? They must obey. With trembling hands, and eyes dimmed with sorrow's briny drops, they dressed themselves, but were careful in leaving behind the linen which Madam Kenelm had sent them to wear the day before. On opening their chamber door, they found

found the abbé waiting. Imma begged in the most persuasive manner to be permitted to see Madam Kenelm, that they might know from what source the calumny flowed. He put his finger on his lips, shrugged up his shoulders, and shook his head; then, taking Imma by the arm, he pulled her quickly along: Theresa followed. In going through the park, Imma again entreated him to suffer them to stay until Madam Kenelm arose. He frowned, and was silent; then, pushing them through the park gate, he bolted it, and bid them walk away, and not loiter there.

"Here," said Theresa, as she looked at the spot on which she had fallen, when Madam Kenelm found her,—"here, my Imma, I may die."

"No, indeed you must not; for, see, that wretch is watching us, to see if we go on, or perhaps he will whip us."

"And

"And where can we go? Not far, I fear: this sudden shock is too much for me. How securely did I hold myself of this good lady's offices! How did I paint to myself happy success in her intercessions! I saw my angry uncle softening at her pleadings. What influence, what weight, would she have had in my cause! The protection of a woman so known, so good, would have guarded me from the world's slights."

"Can she be so good, my Theresa, and send us thus from her house, in as piteous a state as when she took us in, without giving us the possibility of refuting what she has heard against us?"

"Yes, be assured she is good: she has been deceived. That abbé I suspect; but how he can have worked her to his purpose, I cannot divine: depend on it we are the unhappy victims to his machinations. He has wounded, stabbed

stabbed our characters mortally: we have fallen into his snares. His character, I read, is envy, malice, and revenge."

"Oh, Theresa! he is an abbé—brought up to the church! He must be good!"

"Thy good heart would think so; but believe me he is what I say."

They had walked several miles, and the sun was pretty high, when they sat down to rest on a bank by the road-side; when Imma, taking the few pieces of silver out of her pocket, said, "Let us see what we are worth." As she was counting it over, a man passed with a basket on his arm.

"How far," said Theresa, "are we from Lauffen?"

"A short mile," answered the man.

"Have you any thing to sell?" asked Imma, peeping into his basket.

"I have bread, cheese, and butter."

Imma

Imma purchased some bread and butter. "Now, my Theresa, we will make a rural breakfast; and, miserable as we are, it will be a much happier one than the abbé will make, if he is the cause of our present distress."

"Your content and cheerfulness makes me at times forget half my troubles."

After their repast, which they washed down with a cool draught of water, they took a long rest. When they came to the entrance of the town of Lauffen, they saw a narrow lane, which ran at the back of the town: this lane they took to avoid the curious eye of the inhabitants, and walked on, unobserved, many miles; nor had they had any thing to keep up their strength since the morning's meal of bread, butter, and water. A small open carriage with one horse passing by, Theresa beckoned the man: he stopped: she asked how

far it was to Brannan.—"Eleven miles," said the man.

"Will you carry us there?"

"I am not going there: two miles farther I turn off to a cross-road, which leads to the village I live in."

"Is there a nearer road to Lintz than going through Brannan?"

"Yes, many miles nearer; through my village lies the nearest. You will have a ridge of mountains to cross, which runs from Saltsburgh to the Danube; but the road is good, and many cottages dispersed about the mountains."

This was cheering news to the wearied Theresa, for from Lintz she determined to write to her uncle, if she could find a house to give her shelter the while. Having agreed to give the man ten cruitzers to carry them to his village, they mounted his cart, where he seated them as commodiously as he could;

could; and as the evening came on, Imma, to divert her friend and chase away the gloom, sweetly chanted several airs, both in French and Italian, to the great delight of the hospitable villager. To his wife and daughter he recommended the strangers, and they lodged them clean and comfortably for the night. They rose early: Theresa was much refreshed; and after a breakfast of black bread and milk, for which, and their supper and bed, they paid their host's demand of one gould, the fair unfortunates set forward on their journey, following the directions of the cottager. During this day's journey they met with few travellers, and they passed through but one village, where they bought a little bread.—Night came on, and no house was near; in vain did they look in every direction, and the only shelter which offered was a shed, built to shelter the

cattle from the weather: here they passed the night!

Theresa was in all the distraction of mind her situation could possibly produce on sensibility like her's; Imma reasoned, argued, and sometimes even joked on their sufferings; but all lost their effect. Theresa was worn out; her mind gave way; her energies were gone; she sunk: nor was she sensible to any thing but her sufferings; not only her present, but she anticipated her future woes. Faint for want of necessary support; and the babe within felt the same languor and want with the mother. Theresa, supporting her head on the tender, faithful bosom of Imma, fell into a restless, unquiet sleep. Imma dosed, but soon was disturbed by Theresa's groans.

"Oh, my Imma!" faintly articulated Theresa, "I am going! The hand of death is upon me!" She then drew forth

forth a few soft sighs, and no more was heard.

Imma put her cheek to Theresa's lips: they were cold. She called for help: none was near. She screamed: the winds only answered. She laid her friend's head gently on the ground, and ran wildly out of the shed—all was dark: not a sound did she hear but the echo of her own cries. She felt her way back to the body of her friend—knelt and wept over it: then prayed with fervent piety to that great Being, who kills and makes alive again, to look down with mercy on the prostrate sufferer. At length a soft deep sigh gave Imma hopes that suspended life was returning. Not one drop even of cold water to assist struggling nature. Long was it before the exhausted Theresa recovered the power of utterance; during which, Imma's feelings were agonized beyond description; a faintly articu-

lated word, and weak sigh now and then, were the painful assurances of Theresa's existence.

The soft, grey dawn, breaking through the darker shades of night, was truly welcome to the despairing Imma; and with a tender inquiring look she viewed the pale features of her friend. She endeavoured to raise her from the cold earth, but her numbed limbs could not support her; and it was long, by the friction of Imma's soft hand, aided by the vivifying sun, whose radiant beams were fast climbing the eastern hills, ere invigorating warmth could be communicated to Theresa's icy limbs.

At length Theresa, supported by Imma's arm, walked slowly on a great while, but no great distance; they met a man driving some cows, of whom Imma asked a draught of milk for Theresa.

He

He said, "The milk is not mine, but, as the lady looks so ill, I will venture in charity to give so much of my master's property."

Theresa blessed him, and eagerly drank the nourishing draught.

"Will you, ladies," said the peasant, "rest at my mother's cottage? It stands at the foot of yon mountain: a mile from hence."

Theresa smiled her thanks. "Sit you down: in half an hour I shall return, and will lead you to our cottage."

"May Heaven smile on all your actions, and may your kind heart meet its just reward!" said Imma, with an impassioned tenderness. "How rich a treasure dost thou possess!" continued Imma, while her eyes followed the humane peasant. "Art thou a being of the same order with the Abbé Corbeau, who drove us two mornings ago from the hospitable roof of Madam

Kenelm? No: surely not. How did that look of benevolent pity become thy sun-burnt face! How like a ministering angel didst thou look, when thy honest brown hand presented the cup of milk to my friend! And open-hearted charity prompted thee to offer thy cottage as an asylum to two lost, miserable females. Gratitude will strengthen the energies of a soul, which can never cease to adore worth like your's." Then sunk the apostrophizing Imma on her knees and prayed.

"Great God! thou hast blessed this humble peasant with a soft, benign heart—thou hast not only stamped his outward form with thy image, but hast filled him with thy benevolent spirit—look down with pleasure on his actions, prosper his endeavours, and may his life, spent in domestic happiness, terminate in religious glory!"

Imma had just risen from the supplicating

plicating posture her fervent spirit had bent her to, when the peasant appeared; and offering his arm to Theresa, he supported her to the cottage. During their walk, he frequently turned a kind inquiring look on Theresa, which she observed, and plainly told him, that when she was more at ease, she would relate the cause of her present situation.

"That, lady, you will soon be, for our cottage is very comfortable, and we have many good things, which my mother will give you."

Imma walked by his side, but spoke not; the unfeigned goodness of his heart sunk deep on her's, and a melancholy weight oppressed it. She sought for, but could see no means of rewarding his kindness.

"Here, mother," said the young man, as he entered the cottage, "are two ladies, I have brought, pray feed

and take care of them; they are weary, and need your assistance. See to them, mother."

"Bless you, my son; all I can do for them, I will. Dear, good lady, you look very ill. Here I have a curious cordial, which a good father of yonder convent gave me: he says it is a certain cure for all pains! Do, take this much." Theresa shook her head.

"Nay, do, take it; mother knows it is good," said the young man, joining his entreaties with his mother's.

Theresa took it, and almost instantly felt the effect of its potency, and she begged to lay down; she was led to an upper bed-room, in which every thing bore the characteristic cleanliness of the country. As soon as Imma had seen her friend comfortably at rest, she returned to the kitchen with the cottager to partake of some bread and milk, then

then enjoyed a sweet sleep by the side of Theresa.

When Theresa awoke, she found herself unable to rise: the damps arising from the cold ground on which she had lain the night before, had so penetrated her delicate frame, as nearly to divest her of the use of her limbs, and the pain she suffered was excruciating.

Lissa was so much alarmed at her complaints, that she flew to the convent for father Basil. Out of breath, and with an afflicted look, she addressed him.

"O! father! my good father—for the love of women, come to my cottage. My dear Joseph——"

"I hope he is not ill, Lissa," said the father, deliberately."

"No, but he brought me this morning two angel-like looking ladies, and one of them is a-dying."

"Where, my best Lissa; where did they come from? Who are they?"

"I do not know; but haste, father, with me; for the love of women, father, haste, or she must die."

"I will, my daughter, I will, but let me go prepared. Now, daughter," said he, hobbling from his deposit of medicines; "now, my best Lissa, we will, with the favour of our Great Master, save the lady's life."

"Ah! father, without that nothing can be done."

"No, Lissa, nothing that is good. The evil spirit worketh evil, but in the name of the good spirit, do we offer our services to the miserable and the helpless; and the glorious Son of the most glorious Fathers, marks our hearts and actions to the promotion of our future happiness or misery."

"Now, Lissa, if these women are good or bad, they are ill, you say, and distressed, therefore they demand our pity and assistance. Stop, Lissa, we will

will rest a bit on this clump, and I will explain to you the difference of relieving a good person and a bad one; none, Lissa, must be lost for want."

"O! dear father, no—the lady may die if we stay to rest."

"Is she so very ill then? I am tired, you walk fast, and my old limbs will not move so well as your's; but I must needs on, if danger is in the case."

"Ha! do, dear father—here, take my arm, and son Joseph shall saddle the ass to take you back."

In much pain and difficulty the tender-hearted Basil arrived at the cottage, and, with great humanity, inquired of Theresa's feelings and pain; she was almost too low to give the necessary answers; he saw she was in a situation which required the greatest tenderness, and then administered his medicines with caution. On leaving the chamber, he charged Lissa to take

the greatest care of the lady, and keep the chamber quiet. Of Imma, who attended him down stairs, he inquired by what accident they had fallen into the care of Lissa: Imma begged he would excuse her giving any other account of her friend, than that she was related to a very respectable family in Vienna; that the servant who undertook to take care of them, had robbed them, and rode away with the mules from Kufstein, from which place they had travelled on foot, having no money, and totally unknown in that part of Germany: that when Theresa was sufficiently recovered, she would give him a faithful relation of all her misfortunes. "Enough, my daughter," said the good man. He then desired Lissa to provide carefully and properly for her guests, which the convent would enable her to do. He mounted the ass Joseph had saddled, who walked by his side to the convent.

Lissa gave up her bed to Imma, and insisted on watching that night by the bed of Theresa; Imma did not object to it, as she found Nature required rest.

For several days Theresa's recovery was doubtful. A premature birth was feared; and father Basil took the advice of two other fathers of the convent, who studied pharmacy, and by their joint exertions, in ten days her recovery was nearly effected; and Theresa formed a hope of being able to proceed on her journey, yet knew not how to leave the cottage without rewarding the inhabitants for their great care and tenderness; after much deliberation and Imma's advice, she determined to make her true story known to father Basil. Indeed, Imma felt little inclination to leave a comfortable cottage, to again undertake a peregrination without friends or money. On father

father Basil's next visit, Theresa told him that when he had leisure to attend, she wished to make him acquainted with her true situation.

"It is," said she, "a confidence your care and friendship demands; and the relief I hope to find from your advice, will compensate for the pain the recital will consequently inflict."

"Open your heart, my dear daughter," replied the good man; "to remove your mental sufferings, shall be as much my care, as has been to relieve your bodily ones."

Theresa, encouraged by these kind assurances, went minutely through her tale, from her first acquaintance with Obreskoff, to that present hour.

During the relation, his fine aged face visibly expressed the alternate passion of his mind, pity, pain, and displeasure, but this did not intimidate Theresa; she took to herself all the blame

blame due, nor did she endeavour to extenuate the greatest of her faults.—A tale so pathetic, so artless, and so ingenuously told, could not fail to insure her Father Basil's services. Of Imma, he also heard, and sighed at the dangers she had past. His advice to Theresa was, that she should write to her uncle, and send it by some trusty messenger, and no one so proper could be found as the kind Joseph, to whose master Father Basil applied for leave to send him on the embassage. Joseph was delighted, and felt much consequence from the trust reposed in him. Theresa wrote a letter of penitence and contrition, which was enclosed in one from Father Basil, containing an account of her situation, and assurances of her meriting his forgiveness and protection,

Lissa, who thought a journey of a hundred and eighty miles a fearful undertaking

undertaking for her Joseph, was fully employed in making preparations for him. "And our ass, Father Basil," said Lissa (when she was talking of the journey), "the dear animal will never be able to carry my Joseph so far; and if he should die on the road, how will the dear boy bring him home?"

"And if that should be the case, Lissa," said Father Basil, smiling—"would you wish to have him brought home?"

"O! holy Jerome, yes. I would not for the world that his faithful body should lie any where but at the bottom of the garden. He is, next my son, my greatest care. He carried my dear old Joseph ten years, and never fell with him but once!"

"And was not that fall the cause of the good old man's death?"

"Alas! father, I cannot say if it was

was or no: poor man, he had been ill a long time before."

"Be at ease, the ass shall stay here; Joseph shall go better mounted: I have engaged a good horse for him, and he sets out to-morrow, by break of day."

Theresa's mind felt much at ease after she had made the kind bosom of Father Basil the repository of her griefs; and she soon recovered so far as to walk with Imma, two or three times a week, to the convent, to perform her religious duties; and, in an evening, they would frequently ramble on the mountain's side.

Joseph did not travel with the speed of an especial messenger, for it was not until the eleventh day that he returned. When Theresa heard the foot-steps of his horse, her bosom throbbed with a thousand painful emotions.

Lissa went to the door, and pressed her boy to her bosom, as he descended from

from his horse. To say leaped from his horse, would give a wrong idea of the firm, steady motions of a German.—Few passions of the soul, which are the grand impellers of all our actions, at any time so much influence a German, as to quicken the usual motions of his body. Joseph received his mother's embrace, gave her in return one as truly affectionate. He then went to Theresa's apartment, with a face clouded with disappointment, and a heart melting with pity.

"Alas! madam," said he, "I have been very unsuccessful; the gentleman to whom your letter was directed, was not at home; he had been absent some time, nor could his servants say when he would return."

"Did you hear," asked Theresa, where he was gone?"

"No, madam; I asked for a direction, but they could not give me one;

one; for I would have taken the packet to him, had it been a hundred miles farther. Seeing me so desirous to deliver the packet to their master, one of the servants asked who it came from. I said, cooly, I did not know: he gave me an unbelieving smile, and said, 'You know where you came from?' Yes, returned I, well. 'And where?' he asked. That I shall not tell, said I. That, madam, is all that passed, and all I could learn; but if you please I will go again, whenever you think proper."

Theresa's spirits sunk at this account, nor could she form any idea where her uncle could be gone, that the servants did not know where to send to him.

Joseph then went to the convent, to give Father Basil an account of his journey. He received it in the presence of the abbot, who, after Joseph had left the parlour, told Father Basil,

"That

"That they must take care of the unfortunates, until a reconciliation could be effected. To my sister, the Baroness of Berkendoff, I will write for such things as shall be necessary against the birth of the child. As that, you say, is an uncertain period, you will regulate the expences at the cottage, for the defraying of which I will set an application on foot."

Father Basil retired for the night, highly pleased with the abbot's determination of protecting two females, for whom he felt himself much interested.

Early the next morning the abbot, attended by Father Basil, visited Theresa, and informed her of the protection she might rely on from them: to which she, in the fulness of her gratitude, exclaimed, "Blessed be the name of the Lord, who has raised me up friends so good and powerful!" She then

then hinted her wish that Joseph might be sent again to Vienna in the course of a week or two, which the abbot promised should be done; then gave Lissa some instructions concerning providing for their pensioners, and took their leave.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

In vain did Gregory traverse towns and villages for near three weeks, during which time Lord Stellor recovered his strength, so as to take short rides with his friend. He often spoke of Imma, but Lord Linton never encouraged the subject. On Gregory's return, Lord Stellor asked where he had been, or if he was just returned from Amalfi; what news from Imma, and why his groom had been with him.

So many questions, and so unexpected, Gregory was not prepared to answer: he looked confused, and left the room.

"What can this mean? my dear Frederic: tell me; how strangely Gregory behaves."

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Felix, I cannot answer for his manners; but conclude he has so great an esteem for Imma, that he does not like to hear you name her."

Lord Stellor sighed, and, however he was dissatisfied with the answer, he said no more. In the evening he walked in the garden by himself, and conversed with Lord Linton at times, who was sitting in the balcony with a book; he slipped unseen into the stable, where he interrogated James respecting his absence with Gregory. The man, understanding that his master was perfectly recovered, and not having been cautioned, innocently gave a minute detail of their fruitless journey. He heard the account with well-dissembled calmness, then returned to his walk in the garden. At the usual summons he attended supper, but did not eat, which Lord Linton observing, pressed him to take some meat, which

he refused, took a glass of wine, then ordered West to attend him.

Contrary to his usual custom, he observed a strict silence during the preparations for rest.

The next morning he appeared at breakfast, but a sullen silence sat on his brow. To all Lord Linton's questions he gave few and slight answers; took one cup of coffee, then retired to his chamber, which he paced with violent agitation the whole morning. When dinner was announced, he desired to be excused; this alarmed Lord Linton—he went to his chamber, and entreated his company.

"My dear Frederic, I cannot eat," was his answer.

"Then, my friend, you cannot be well, and I must send for advice."

The physician was immediately sent for; he felt his pulse, shook his head, and assured Lord Linton that the cause

was not removed; that it was not in the power of medicine to effect it. It would assist the body in sustaining the violent workings of the mind, therefore he recommended that what he should prescribe be duly administered.

Lord Linton's distress was very great; he was at a loss what steps to take, and how to contradict the pleasing hopes he had the week before sent to the Earl and Countess of Cleobright, and prepared them to expect their son in England in a short time.

Lord Stellor evinced the greatest dislike to company, and appeared agitated and uneasy when his friend or valet were in the room. He each night rested a shorter time than the last, till at length he walked his room the whole night, and continually murmuring in a low tone of voice his distresses; and sometimes he sweetly, but plaintively sung his loss of Imma, in irregular

numbers, such as his distracted brain dictated. And in this state Sir George Philomath and Prince Gareci found him after an absence of eight weeks.

Lord Linton felt a great relief at the sight of Sir George, and flew to welcome him, when he was surprised at finding a lady make a third person in the carriage. He shook his friend by the hand, and politely assisted the lady to alight.

"How is my Lord Stellor?" inquired Sir George. Lord Linton shook his head. When they were seated, and some refreshments set before them, his lordship related in Italian, out of respect to the prince, the promising recovery and sudden relapse of Lord Stellor. The lady shed tears at the description of his lordship's derangement, when they were suddenly alarmed at a noise in Lord Stellor's chamber, whom they found in a violent passion with West,

West, for assuring him that the lady he saw with Sir George was not Imma. When Sir George entered the apartment, Lord Stellor threw his arm round his neck, which very much terrified the timid baronet.

"My dear Sir George!" exclaimed the fanatic, "a thousand thanks for bringing me my dear Imma. Do not let Linton see her," whispered he: "she loves him. No—he must not see her: she drew his picture. No, no: she would not draw mine."

His lips then continued to move for some time, but no articulate word could be heard. He then turned from Sir George, folded his arms, and paced the room and talked in a whisper. In an hour he again raved for Imma, when the lady begged he might see her, if they thought it would convince him that she was not the Imma he wanted. Lord Linton led her to the room, and,

opening the door, said, "My lord, here is the lady you suspect to be Imma."

He caught her hands, and, looking tenderly at her, said, "No, indeed, you are not my Imma; but you are like her: pray stay with me until she comes."

"I will, my lord, if you will promise to sit and eat with me, and converse quietly."

"Yes, if you will talk of Imma.—Ah! I know she is gone to England: she wanted to see Lady Maria. Linton is with me, you know, so she cannot be with him."

"Well, my lord, shall we go to England after her?"

"Yes; but Linton shall not go, for she loves him—she drew his picture!"

By flattering promises the lady prevailed on him to take some coffee with her, and he was calm and rational for a long

a long interval, during which the prince gave Lord Linton an account of their trip, Sir George having retired to his room, to form plans of advice for Lord Linton.

"We have," said the prince, "had a pleasant excursion. In our way to Matera we went some miles out of our road, for Sir George expressed a great desire to taste the oysters of Brundusium; but there he was not fully gratified, for he said they did not by any means equal those he had eaten in England. We examined the parts, saw fine prospects, but found little in Sir George's way. At Matera we spent three weeks most agreeably, as I saw company every day. When I had settled all my business with my steward, we made the tour of Tarento.

"One evening, as we were returning through an extensive wood, my uncle started—I looked to find the cause,

and discovered something dart quickly between the trees. I ordered my servant to dismount, and go in search of it, for I was sure it was a female, and judged she must want protection if alone, as that part of the wood was some miles from house or village. Sir George argued the impropriety of it, which added to the natural timidity of my servant, and he could not move. I alighted, and, fastening my bridle to a tree, bid my servant follow me. When I arrived at the spot, I found a female endeavouring to escape, but her clothes were entangled in the thorns and underwood. I addressed her with politeness, and offered my protection; she faintly thanked me; then asked in the same feeble tone, 'Are you a native of Tarento?' 'No,' answered I.—'Do you live in these parts?' she again asked: 'I have a palace at Matera, which is many miles from hence, but there

there I reside only a few weeks in each year.' 'If, signore, you will,' said she, 'protect me, and by some safe conveyance send me to Germany, a noble family will reward you for your care. Ask not my name or rank, for I judge it not safe to divulge either until I am not only out of the principality of Tarento, but out of Italy.'—I immediately made her every promise she asked, then led her to the mules, placed her on the servant's, and bid him walk by its side. The lady appeared to be extremely weak and faint, and expressed great fear of being seen; declared she would rather sleep in the wood than go into any house at Tarento. After a short consultation with Sir George, I placed the lady behind me, and sent with all speed to the inn, to order our carriage to meet us. On its arrival I placed the lady in it, and gave the coachman strict orders to see

her safe under my housekeeper's care at Matera. She was very grateful that she was to perform the journey in the night. In a few days after we returned to Matera, where we found the lady a little recovered in her health, which she said had been much injured by improper treatment. The clothes she wore were extremely bad and torn. The housekeeper furnished her with a change from my dear wife's wardrobe."

"Your wife, prince!" exclaimed his lordship: "I had no knowledge of your being married."

"Nor am I, my lord. Heaven thought fit to deprive me of that best of blessings, a good wife, in less than two years after she had given me a fine boy."

"And where is he?"

"There, my lord, I a second time felt the hand of Heaven! While I was travelling through all climates with my princess,

princess, in search of health, I lost my child, and now I am a lonely wanderer, and move from place to place with a view to benefit my fellow-creatures; and, however the rich may laugh at my pursuits, the poor bless them. In Germany, where I chiefly reside, on account of a sister, who I wish to be near, I have upward of a hundred pensioners. I have also as many at Tarento and Bologna, where I have an estate. My care is chiefly bestowed on the aged and infirm, and helpless children."

Here Sir George entered, and said, "Well, my lord, have you heard the full account of our acataleptic lady?"

"Yes, Sir George, all which the prince is in possession of; but there is yet much to know."

"Ah! but we must suspend our curiosity until we are out of Italy. I hope she will not in the end prove fa-

cinorous. But, my dear lord, respecting our dear friend, Felix—it appears that no relief can be administered to him here; and it is the physician's opinion, that Imma alone can perform the cure: therefore, I think it is adviseable to move as fast as his health will admit, towards Germany, at which place I will advise the earl and countess to meet us; for at Pasaw lives a physician, an old friend of mine, most famous for his skill in all human disorders, and from him I expect great things."

Lord Linton, eager to catch at the most distant hope, and determined that nothing for the benefit of his friend should be unattempted, immediately set about the arrangements for the journey.

Lord Stellor was so attached to the strange lady, that he would not suffer her out of his sight, and though he talked

talked in an incoherent, wild strain, yet he was always calm; but when she was absent, he either fell into wild ravings or melancholy fits. To her, Lord Linton consigned the task of proposing the journey to him.

"What!" said he, when she asked him if he would go with her, "what! are you going to look for Imma?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then Linton shall not go with us: he must not see her."

"He must go, my lord; but he has promised not even to look at Imma."

"Ah! but she loves him: she carries his picture in her heart—she drew it."

All things being ready, in a few days they left Manfredonia, in the full hope that better advice, and the company of his father, mother, and sister, would have every good effect.

In the first six days, by slow travelling,

ling, they completed two hundred miles. They stopped early each night, nor did they begin their journey till late in the morning, yet the fatigue was too much for the debilitated state of Lord Stellor, and, as his fever increased, his fits of raving were more frequent; and his deep melancholy intervals longer. On the eighth day they with difficulty reached Urbino, and, as it was deemed impossible to proceed, a private house was directly taken, a physician sent for, who said but little in favour of his patient, and immediately sent both medicine and a nurse.

After remaining a fortnight at Urbino, and no alteration for the better taking place in Lord Stellor's health, Sir George and the prince, with their incognito, made preparations for their departure for Germany, leaving Lord Linton the sole care of his frenzied friend; but the day before their departure

ture a letter, forwarded from Passaw, arrived, in which the earl informed Sir George, that the last accounts of his dear Felix had so affected the countess, that she at that time was confined by a dangerous fever. Lady Maria's health was also much deranged; that, as soon as the countess's health would admit, they would begin their journey. To Lord Linton he was unbounded in his thanks; indeed, the heart of the good earl was rent by the accounts of his son, and the dangerous illness of his countess.

Lord Linton finding that one nurse could not attend Lord Stellor night and day, requested the physician to send another, which he did, and strongly recommended her as a woman on whom the greatest reliance might be placed. When she entered Lord Stellor's room an unaccountable tremor seized her, which West observed, begged

ged her not to be frightened; that his lordship was perfectly harmless.

"It is not," said she, "the effect of fear; it is something which I feel but cannot describe; for I know not what it is."

From Lord Stellor she could not take her eyes; and she felt such an uncommon interest for him at her heart that she scarcely admitted any other to attend him, and was regardless of rest.

On the second day of Agatha's attendance, Gregory entered his Lordship's room; during his conversation with Lord Stellor, he complained of a violent pain in his arm from a blow he had received some days before by accident.

Agatha, after much persuasion, prevailed on him to let her bathe it with a curious embrocation she always carried with her, and which was a never-failing anodyne for all pains. She followed

lowed him to his apartment with her nostrum. In assisting him to turn up his shirt-sleeve, she gave a most violent scream, and instantly fell on a chair; Gregory was alarmed, and called for help; as she recovered she sighed, "Ho! that mark!"

"Why, Agatha, it is not very frightful; it is only a bunch of grapes, and is seldom seen but when they are in season."

"Alas! sure I have seen it before."

"Such an one you may, but never mine."

"It is so, it must be your face, your eyes, your complexion, is so like him."

"Him, who? Agatha, who am I like?"

"A-lack-a-day! sir, we see so many people like each other, and yet are not related. O! dear. Well now, sir, if you please, I am now quite well. Now, sir, I will bathe your arm. I am quite well."

"Not quite, I think, Agatha; you tremble

tremble much. Why the longer you rub my arm, the more you tremble."

"It will go off, sir; but now I warrant the lady, your mother, is mainly fond of grapes."

"Indeed I do not know, Agatha."

"Why did she never tell you so, when she has seen your arm? It is so natural to tell a child."

"But, Agatha, I never knew my mother."

"Poor lady! did she die before your remembrance?"

"There, I thank you, Agatha, my arm is rubbed enough. That will do."

Agatha was unwilling to relinquish her employment, hoping, by her questions, to learn from him who and what he was. Gregory was as unwilling she should remain, as she put questions to him he could not answer; besides to a chattering old nurse he did not wish to tell his story. Agatha was restless

restless and unhappy. Certain suspicions, hopes, and fears, took place in her mind; and how to confirm or confute them, she knew not.

On Gregory's relating the circumstances of Agatha's fainting on seeing the mark on his arm, to Lord Linton, he said it was strange, and advised him to inform her of his situation, "For," said he, "as your friends are unknown, even their names are a secret, it is possible she may throw some light on the mystery."

Gregory, in order to follow Lord Linton's advice, never failed to visit Lord Stellor's apartment two or three times a-day, in hopes Agatha would ask him some question that would lead him to speak of himself, but she was silent on the subject: yet the affectionate attention she paid to Lord Stellor and Gregory, was remarked by all the family; and had she been twenty years younger, might

might have been spoken of to her disadvantage.

Gregory seeing her determined silence, one evening asked her to bathe his arm again.

"It is not quite well, but I think another bathing will set it quite to rights."

He turned up his shirt-sleeve, and Agatha, with a tender hand, rubbed his arm.

"These grapes, do not frighten you now, Agatha."

"No; but they make my heart ache."

"Your heart ache! Agatha, how is that?"

"Why nineteen years ago I had the care of a fine boy, who had such a bunch of grapes on his arm."

"And where is he now?" said Gregory, agitated.

"O! Holy Paul preserve me—I know not—I lost him."

"And

"And do you think I am he?"

"You are like his father."

"And where is he?"

"That I know not—but I believe in England."

"Well, Agatha, all I can inform you of myself is, that I was found on one of the Appennines by a good man, now abbot of a convent at Amalfi: by him have I been preserved and protected, and to him I shall return in a few weeks; and in his convent am I to spend my life, unless my parents are discovered."

"They shall be, they will be discovered! No, my dear child, you shall not go back until I have found your father." She then threw her arms round his neck, and wept in an agony.

Gregory then urged her to tell him his father's name, but she refused; saying——

"It is right I should make all the necessary

necessary inquiries after your father. I have others to discover before I can render justice to all; and what is still harder, I must confess an act of cruelty and injustice which nothing can atone. Be at peace, my dear child, you shall be restored to your parents, if I walk to England to do it; but be not impatient, I will do justice, though I condemn myself."

When Gregory repeated this conversation to Lord Linton, he advised him to let Agatha take her own means to discovsr his parents, as she seemed to be very mysterious in her manner. He gave him joy on the happy prospect.

Gregory thanked him, and skipped about in high spirits at the idea of having it in his power to refuse shutting himself up for life.

Madam Kenelm, on her return from her attendance on her sister-in-law, was surprised

surprised at finding Theresa and Imma gone, and much offended at the manner of their leaving the house, as it was represented to her by Mons. Abbé.

He, after seeing them some distance from the gate, returned to their chamber, and seeing the clothes lay which Madam Kenelm had supplied them with, he carefully deposited them in his box; also a silver cup and two spoons, which they had used at supper; he then went to bed.

On his not appearing in the study at the usual hour, M. William Kenelm went in quest of his preceptor, who he found in bed, complaining of a dreadful head-ache, and begged to be excused attending breakfast.

Soon after, the housekeeper missing the itinerant ladies, she went to the abbé's room in a great fright.

"They are gone," cried she, "Mons. Abbé."

"Gone!

"Gone! who is gone?" said he, starting.

"Why the two ladies."

"No matter—let them go—I hope they have not robbed the house!"

"Ah! God forbid; I have not missed any thing."

"Well, go and look; but do not disturb me again about them: I am ill."

"Shall we not seek after them?"

"No. I insist that no person make any inquiry about them; they are vile, wicked women, or they would not have gone so." He then turned round, under pretence of taking another nap."

In about two hours, Ursula returned to his room wringing his hands, and in the most frantic manner exclaimed,

"As sure as Joseph loved the Holy Virgin, they have taken away two spoons and a silver cup."

"That proves the folly of feeding beggars

beggars and vagabonds out of silver spoons and cups."

"O! dear, sure your reverence, they did not look like beggars; and I can hardly persuade myself that they have got them."

"Why, woman, who do you think has got them? Do you suspect me?" roared he, in such a tone as made her start.

"O! Holy Joseph! No, your reverence; you got them, no—they must have them to be sure; but I can hardly think——"

"No matter what you think. But I know Madam Kenelm harbours all sorts of creatures; so she must put up with the loss. Pray let me hear no more about them, and leave me."

"Well," said Ursula, as she shut the door, "the Abbé is a wise man, and knows all things, so it must be as he says; they can be no better than thieves, that's certain."

Ursula was the first to acquaint Madam Kenelm with the flight of Theresa and Imma; and impressed, as she had been by the Abbé, with a firm belief of their wickedness, she told it with all the aggravation it would admit of.

"Ursula," said Madam Kenelm, "you astonish me! I could not think it possible! They have deceived me greatly!"

"A, lack-a-day, madam, nor could I believe it till Mons. Abbé made me; and to be sure, it is as plain that they are bad women as the Holy Saint's finger and thumb on the fish; and that is plain enough to all Christian eyes I am sure."

When Madam Kenelm saw the Abbé, he confirmed Ursula's account, with many severe reflections.

A few evenings after the return of M. Kenelm, which was many weeks after Madam Kenelm's arrival from her sis-

ter's, as she had nearly ended a full relation which she had given her husband of Theresa and Imma's suffering's, also of their departure from her house, two carriages drove up the park, and the servant announced Prince Gareci and friends; for Madam Kenelm was the sister he so much loved, and for whom he deserted his native country, and the most beautiful palace in Italy, near Bologna, and chiefly resided in an ancient castle, about twenty miles from her.

After the usual ceremony of introduction, the prince informed his sister that he had to request the favour of her protection for the lady he had brought. But, continued he—

"I am ignorant of her name and rank, but I have no doubt, as I have brought her safe out of Italy, agreeable to her request, that in a few days she will honour you with her confidence."

"Yes," replied the lady, dressing her languid looks with a smile; "I read in that benign countenance that I have found a friend and confidant, and I trust I shall prove myself worthy of her interest and piety; and in a few days I hope to have recovered my strength and spirits, sufficient to enable me to relate my wrongs and sufferings.

"While I remained in Italy, and fancied myself in danger of being recovered by the inhuman wretch who has tyrannized over me for years past, my fears gave me strength and spirits—now I feel myself in safety and beyond his power, all are giving way, my mind is confused, and that dreadful debility of body under which I have laboured for many years, I feel returning with increased pain."

Madam Kenelm immediately conducted her to a chamber, and ringing for Ursula, committed the lady to her care,

care, and returned to enjoy the evening's repast with her brother and friend.

In the morning, Madam Kenelm found her fair guest much worse, and sent for medical assistance. The physician gave it as his opinion that his patient was in no immediate danger, but judged that her illness might be long and tedious, that she would require much care. Madam Kenelm sent for a nurse to be constantly with her, that no attention to her health might be omitted.

Prince Gareci expressed much regret at having brought so much trouble to his sister, but added, that from her conversation and manners, he was persuaded she was a person of rank and distinction; that he hoped to be instrumental in placing her happily with her friends.

One day, Sir George was making observations on the mysterious silence

which the lady kept, but whose health continued in so weak a state, as to render it impossible, without a great breach of tenderness and delicacy, to urge her to disclose her story; which led Madam Kenelm to mention Theresa and Imma, saying, with what open and apparent frankness they told their story.

"Imma!" cried Sir George, starting; "What Imma? Dear madam, do you know any thing of Imma?"

"Your eagerness, Sir George, surprises me; you certainly know nothing about the girl I speak of—I found her near the park gate, weeping over her friend, who had fainted from fatigue; I took them in and administered every possible comfort to them: they ran away on the second night, and robbed me."

"No, madam! it is true; she cannot be the Imma I am seeking; she could not commit one act of peculation."

"Pray,

"Pray, sister," said the prince "what account gave they of themselves?"

"The little Italian," said she, "had been stolen from Amalfi, by a Lord Stellor."

"By Heavens! madam, she is the Imma I am seeking," exclaimed Sir George, jumping from his seat—"Where is she? She rob! no—my life for it, she did not! I would give half my fortune I could find her—nay, I would give the most valuable antique I am in possession of, the very arrow with which Paris wounded Achilles."

"Dear Sir," said Madam Kenelm, "is it possible; indeed, I cannot say where she is gone; but the German lady said her friends live at Vienna."

"I know nothing, madam, of the German lady; but Imma, all loveliness and innocence, could commit no nocent act against any person: and nothing but autopsy can ever persuade me that

she has been guilty of a single hallucination. To Vienna I will go this instant."

It was with some difficulty Madam Kenelm prevailed on Sir George to postpone his journey until the morning, and she would relate the whole she knew of Theresa. The account afforded Sir George but little information; but as he understood Lintz was the place she wished to reach, and from thence write to her uncle, he determined to go there first. As Madam Kenelm was ignorant of her uncle's name and her's, except that of Theresa, Sir George was very particular as to her person, that he might describe her in his inquiries. Early in the morning he began his journey, and as he was sure Imma had passed that road, he inquired at every cottage, and of every cottager he met, but without success, except from one man, who assured him that he

he sold some bread and butter to two such females as he described, many weeks before. This gave Sir George no clue, only a stronger hope of finding them. At Lintz, his endeavours were vain, and he determined to go to Pasaw, and give up the idea of visiting Vienna, as he was ignorant of the name and rank of the man he wished to find.

At Pasaw, he found letters from the Earl of Cleobright: those for Lord Linton he forwarded. By one for himself, he found the countess was better, and would, in a week, leave England. This account determined Sir George to wait their arrival, and conduct them to their son, as there was little hopes of the possibility of his meeting them, as they expected.

CHAP. V.

In a few weeks, the hospitable abbot sent the faithful Joseph again to Vienna to M. Kruges; he delivered the letter, and received one in return for the abbot.

Theresa, suffering under every inconvenience incident to her situation, waited in painful anxiety Joseph's return. His arrival announced, she fainted in the arms of Imma, as if from his hands she expected to receive her condemnation. She recovered, and asked what from her uncle; on being told only a letter for the Abbot, she sunk again.

The good opinion the abbot had formed of M. Kruges, from the high character Theresa had given him, was much depreciated

depreciated on reading his letter. It was full of the utmost invectives against Theresa and her paramour, desiring the abbot to trouble him no more on her account; the dishonour she had brought on him, not even her blood could wash off, which, was she within his reach, he certainly would let flow. As to her further support, it would never be his concern.

Slow and mournfully did the good man move towards the cottage, coining in his mind some palliative to the cruel letter.

"I read, father," said Theresa, as he entered her apartment, "I read by that tender gloom on your countenance, that I am a rejected out-cast!"

"No, my daughter—not so—time will do away all things—time will soften your uncle—time will prove the truths I have written to him, which he now disbelieves. Have patience, my

daughter—be penitent—rely on us, and all may yet be well. We will not give up the good work we have begun; for was you the willing accessary to your own ruin, your uncle appears to think you, your helpless isolate state demands our care as men; and your returning virtue calls for our assistance, as the servants of God. You may yet be in heaven a fairer saint, than if you had never sinned."

"Your words are comfort, dear father. But my child! If that lives——"

"That shall be our care; and, at a proper time, devote it to the services of its Creator; and the offspring of sin shall become the child of grace."

Theresa went to rest, greatly oppressed by the rigid conduct of her uncle, but much comforted by the goodness of the abbot. She passed a night of pain and restlessness. In the morning, it was Lissa's opinion that Theresa would

would soon want assistance, and accordingly she sent to acquaint Father Basil, who immediately set off for the cottage; and early in the afternoon gave proofs, notwithstanding Lissa's fears, that he was as fully acquainted with the obstetric art, as with the powers and qualities of drugs, and to the great joy of Imma, put into her arms a beautiful boy. She shed tears of joy and pity over the first-born of her friend; and blessed the kind tongue of Father Basil, when he pronounced Theresa to be in perfect safety.

None but those fond unfortunate females of sensibility, who have given birth to a child in the absence of its father, and that father loved to excess by the doating, ruined fair one, although by actions the most vile he disgraces the rank he holds as man in society—none but these can tell how the

the pang which renders them mothers is increased by the recollection to how base a being they bear a child; and that the dear innocent may live to weep over its mother's wrongs, and blush at its father's villainies. None but those who have felt and suffered miseries like these, can form the least idea of Theresa's feelings.

The most excruciating anguish filled Theresa's breast; she felt the fulness of her woes; shame and guilt tortured her conscience; love and pity dilated her heart. How exquisite was the maternal embrace! How were her affections drawn forth by the first cry of her infant! Tenderly did she press it to her aching heart, and humbly prayed the child of sorrow might be spared her, as the only softener of her wrongs and reconciler to life.

"O, my beloved innocent! Image of thy cruel father!" would Theresa sigh

sigh out, as she wept over her infant. "Thou wilt never know the tender caresses of him, to whom thou owest thy birth! Brought up in shades and solitude, to which thy mother has flown to hide her debased head—reared by the kind, fostering hands of religious good men, mayest thou never know the vices and wiles of the gay world! May thy innocence bud and bloom far from the dangerous example of thy all-deluding sex!"

Thus did Theresa pour out her soul in tenderness over her infant: thus did she bury in short oblivion the past, and rioted in the delicious feelings of the mother. And in those moments of sacred tenderness would she ask a blessing for, and pray for the conversion of, him who had made her one.

And why, O ye libertines! (for it is you I would address) if any into whose hands this little tale may fall, feels

feels he deserves the disgraceful epithet, why disgrace ye the image of your Creator, with which he has stamped the human form? Why fall from your sublimity of character? Man, superior man! lord of the universe! should nobly, honourably fill the post allotted him on earth. The cause of religion and virtue is his: the happiness and welfare of all beings on earth should be his care. All look up to man; all rely on his affection, humanity, courage, and wisdom; and must woman, who has still a stronger claim on his protection than all other beings on earth, fly him as a fearful evil?

Nature whispers early in the female ear, man is your guardian, your protector, your only earthly reliance. In childhood their affections are led to man by the revered name of father; in youth, by the lively pleasures of a brother;

brother; in maturity, they seek all in the tender name of husband.

What then are your pleasures, your delights, in deviating so wickedly, so widely from your natural and moral duties? Where are your principles of humanity, social affections, generous sympathies—those amiable qualities, on which the dignity of human nature is built? Lost, sunk, buried in dissipation and sensual vices. When the fire of youth is past, and reason re-assumes her reign, then how dreadful the account to settle! Then too late you will feel and acknowledge these dear-purchased truths.

How permanent, how satisfactory are the pleasures of legally protecting an amiable woman! Her virtues are riches, her children are honours, which give respect and consequence to her husband, and rear to his memory living monuments of his worth.

How

How like a beast of prey does that man spend his days, whose constant pursuit is female destruction! He wears the mask of faith and truth, under which he perpetrates the basest deceits; and, after toiling and skulking through life in pursuit of pleasures the most cruel and vicious, he sinks into the grave, a requiem of curses on his head from the dishonoured, broken-hearted friends of his victims.

With what tender delight did Imma assist the good Lissa in nursing Theresa, and her infant, who, by the added care of Father Basil, was at the end of four weeks perfectly recovered.

Imma, when she saw her friend in perfect health, recollected the vow she had made in her name, and frequently repeated the different scenes of fear and distress she had suffered: and in the last trying and fearful moment did she

she pray and promise to the Holy Virgin for her friend.

"I have," said Imma, "my dear Theresa, made a vow to the Holy Virgin in your name, and repeated it often, that, would she preserve and protect you through all your troubles and trials, that you would make a pilgrimage to Loretto! She has hearkened to my prayers, and my vow must be fulfilled."

"It must, and shall, my dear Imma: to Loretto I will go, nay, even to the Holy Land, had you vowed for me; but my dear boy—my child! What will become of him? I will make the pilgrimage with you, and surely between us we can nurse him."

"I fear the long journey at this season of the year, and the many inconveniences we must meet with, will injure his health: we will take the abbot's and Father Basil's advice."

In

In the evening Theresa made her wishes known to the good fathers, who came as usual to visit her. The abbot highly approved of her making the pilgrimage: he said it was an act of faith and gratitude due to the Virgin; but Father Basil objected to her taking her son.

"The long journey will agree with his infant state: the winter is coming on, and the farther you go towards the Alps the colder it will be. It is a long journey: many and great will be the hardships you will meet with in walking so many hundred miles:—all which is right you should bear as an expiation for your sins; but your child must not go—it will certainly be his death. Signora Imma will assist Lissa to nurse him: she will be his mother until your return."

To this Imma objected, for she determined to go with Theresa. At length,

length, after much being said on all sides, it was fixed that Imma was to remain at the cottage with Pheneas Basil, for so Theresa's son was baptized, after the abbot and Father Basil.

Imma with reluctance consented; but it was Theresa's wish, that, as she could not take her child, that Imma should remain with him.

Lissa and Joseph were indefatigable in their inquiries for pilgrims to Loretto, as many set out at that time to visit the Holy Virgin, and make their offerings at Christmas. In a few days Joseph heard of two females, who were on their way to Loretto; he met them on the road, and invited them to his cottage, recommending Theresa to their care. Two days they rested at the cottage, in which time Theresa became acquainted with them: the youngest she found open, frank, and lively; but the

the religious cant of the eldest displeased her.

On the third morning, Theresa's habit, hat, and staff, being ready, she prepared to leave the cottage and her friends; but all insisted on walking with her to the convent, where they were to attend prayers, take breakfast, and receive the blessing of the fathers.

To her aching heart did Theresa press her boy, as she carried him to the convent; but when at parting she resigned him to Imma, a shriek of anguish burst from her, and she fell into Joseph's arms.

"Holy Mother, have pity on her!" said Lissa.

Theresa groaned.

"Madam, the Virgin will strengthen and protect you," continued Lissa: "and for your dear babe, my life shall answer for his."

"God bless you all!" said Theresa.

"I go

"I go in full hope and confidence that the sacrifice I now make will expiate my sins; for to leave my child is a sacrifice indeed; but to your care, my dear friends, do I give him."

She again kissed her boy, Imma, and Lissa; then took the arm of her fellow pilgrim and walked slowly away.

For some time Imma afflicted herself as being the cause of this new trial to her friend; but certain it is, she never would have proposed the pilgrimage had she not thought that herself and Pheneas would have been her companions.

Under Imma's active care, and Lissa's skill in nursing, the fair Pheneas grew fast, to the great delight of the fathers as well as his nurses.

One day, some weeks after Theresa's departure, Imma, with Pheneas in her arms, was returning from the convent, she, to rest herself and enjoy the last rays

rays of a December sun, seated herself on the jut of a tree, by the road-side, when the noise of a whip and carriage-wheels caused her to look up. The next instant a voice she well knew called out, "Stop!" She trembled—in a moment, Lord Linton was at her side!

"My God!" exclaimed he, "Imma! do I see you thus?"

"O!" returned she, violently agitated, "My dear lord, do not tell Father Alberti where I am, for he will shut me up in a convent."

Such a dread had Imma of a convent, that it was always before her eyes.

"No, no, Imma, I will not; but where do you live—in this village?"

"No, my lord, at yonder cottage; two fields off."

"Good heavens! Who supports you?"

"The good fathers of a convent here,"

here," answered Imma, while the tears fell from her eyes.

Lord Linton wiped his.

"I will walk with you to your cottage."

Imma attempted to rise, but she sunk down on her seat again, and Phenias had nearly fallen from her arms.

"Oh, my dear boy!" exclaimed she, as she exerted herself to save him.

"Dear boy, indeed!" repeated Lord Linton in English: "Poor ruined innocence! Oh, my Felix! how insincere are you! How often have you declared, that Imma's honour remained inviolate!"

Imma again attempted to rise, but she trembled so exceedingly she could not hold the infant. Lord Linton was distressed for her, and took the baby; then ordered Franklin to assist Imma. As they walked to the cottage, Lord Linton contemplated the beauties he

held in his arms, and he fancied he could trace in its infant face the fair features of his friend.

Lissa, who had been watching for the return of Imma, was alarmed at seeing her led by a man, and another carrying the child, ran to meet them.

"Bless me! signora, what accident has happened to you?"

"None, Lissa: do not be frightened."

"Why then you have walked too far, and have tired yourself. I told you that you are too weak to carry the child far; but you are so fond of it, that nobody must nurse it but yourself. Well, I do not wonder at it, for he is a sweet child:—Is he not, sir?" she asked Lord Linton, as she took it from his arms. "I am much obliged to you for the care you have taken of the lady,"—followed Imma into the cottage, and shut the door.

"Oh!

"Oh!" said Imma, turning round, "the gentleman is my friend: I knew him at Amalfi—he must come in."

Lissa, making a thousand apologies, opened the door. His lordship then begged Imma to excuse him, that he would see her again in the morning. She again intreated he would not let Father Alberti know where she was; which he again promised, and took his leave.

When he returned to his carriage, he ordered the driver to stop in the village, where he inquired if he could have accommodations for a company of seven, and nine servants, which with some difficulty was procured, and Franklin watched to stop the earl's carriages.

To account for the sudden appearance of Lord Linton, I must inform my readers, that, as soon as the countess's health was restored, the earl, herself, and Lady Maria, set out for

Germany; and at Pasaw they met Sir George Philomath, who every post had received such accounts of Lord Stellor, as gave no hopes of his being removed to Pasaw. It then was concluded, that they should proceed as fast as possible to Urbino, in hopes that the sight of the earl, countess, and Lady Maria, would have some happy effect.

The countess's sufferings cannot either be described or conceived on seeing her dear, her only son, the once beautiful Lord Stellor—his fine form emaciated—his clear, transparent skin, tinged with lemon hue—his blue, soft eye, glassy and wild—and, worse than all, his mental faculties lost in wild delirium and heated frenzy.

When the earl, countess, and Lady Maria, entered his room, he was standing in one corner; his arms folded, his eyes fixed on vacancy. The countess sunk on a chair at a sight so dreadful: with

with soul-piercing pangs did she view the premature, melancholy ruin of a noble building: the form, the pillars, though weakened, were standing, but all that was beautiful within was lost.

When the countess had recovered from the first shock, she walked up to her son, and, taking his left hand, said, "Felix, my dear, do you know me?"

He laid his hand on his heart, and replied; "Yes, it is quite broke: it does not move: it is cold. Why do they send you here? It is Imma I called for. Go, go fetch Imma!"

"I am your mother, my dear Felix: look at me—see, there is your father!"

"She was afraid of me. Yes, Imma! thou divinity! I see you there!" continued he, holding up his hands and eyes to heaven. Each in turn spoke to him, but he had no recollection, not a moment's interval of sanity.

but! how shall I extenuate my crime? How many shall I fill with unhappiness, doubt, and distrust? Holy Virgin! look down on me, and give me strength to declare the truth, so I may die happy!"

Agatha appeared dejected, and a something labouring at her breast was visible to all; yet none could guess the cause.

The next day Lord Stellor had some recollection of his mother and sister, and, after some unconnected conversation, he clasped Lady Maria in his arms: his scalding tears fell on her bosom, and in broken accents asked if she had Imma safe.

"Yes, my dear Felix, she is safe."

"God be praised! But would she not come and see me? She smiled and sighed when last we parted. Surely she will forgive me. Ask her, my dear sister—beg for your poor brother—bring

bring her here."—"No, my brother, we will go to her: the earl and countess will go with us."

"Let us go now," said he, taking her hand: he then stopped, and looking round wildly, "Hush, Linton must not go: she loves him: she drew his picture. O God, this brain will burst!" He then struck his head and raved; called for Imma; "Zelo, Furbo, bring me my Imma!"

This doubly wounded the countess, who had formed the most sanguine hopes from the short interval of sanity she witnessed in his conversation with his sister. Soon after the physician made his visit, with whom the countess and earl had a long interview; and he still declared it as his opinion, that nothing but the object which caused his derangement could remove it; but even that might fail, if it was long before it was administered. When the mind

has thus been in a state of anarchy, and reason has long been driven from her seat, the energies are weakened, and she seldom re-assumes her reign; or, if she does, it is but for a short period.

This candid opinion of the physician alarmed the worthy parents, and they thought every moment lost that was not employed in preparing for their departure from Urbino, for they had great hopes, by making a public inquiry as soon as they should reach Germany, of discovering Imma's retreat, as from Sir George they had strong assurances of her being there.

Lady Maria indulged her brother in almost continually talking of Imma, as it was the only subject which brought a clear idea to his mind. During the first part of the journey he was composed, but seldom spoke, and, when he did, it was only to ask how far they were

were from Imma. Lady Maria often amused him with accounts of Imma's perfections, virtues, and many little conversations which passed between them at Amalfi: to all he would listen with pleased attention; and, when she ceased, he would ask, "Have you nothing more to say of her?"

On their leaving Urbino, Agatha requested to be retained to attend Lord Stellor until he should recover. Gregory was pleased to find that Agatha was going with them, as he did not wish to lose sight of her: he had often pressed her to inform him of the name of his parents, and the rank in life they held when she knew them; but she always excused herself, and begged he would be at ease; that he might rely on her doing the just thing as soon as it was in her power; and the day they left Urbino she whispered Gregory, that soon after they should

reach Germany, she hoped to declare whose son he was.

As Lord Stellor had two or three times been a little noisy, and had drawn the eye of the traveller towards the carriage, to the great distress of his friends, it was agreed to take the most private road to Pasaw, and within eight miles of Brannau they turned from the high road, and took that road which led to the village, near which Imma resided; and Lord Linton, as his carriage was the least encumbered, undertook to precede the party, that his valet might make the necessary preparations for so large a company.

The earl was surprised at being stopped at the entrance of the village by his lordship's valet. "Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Maria, "I hope, Mr. Franklin, your lord has met with no accident." He assured her he had not, but something unexpected had happened,

pened, which obliged him to stop at the village and wait their arrival.

As soon as the carriage stopped at the inn, the earl, countess, Lady Maria, and Sir George, were closeted with his lordship.

"What," said the countess, "my lord, is the cause of all this, and those looks? Are you distressed?"

"I am, countess, both distressed and happy—happy to say I have found the lovely Imma!"

"God be praised!" exclaimed all.

"Where is she?" said the countess, "Let me see her, and, by giving her to my poor boy, make him happy! Was she of obscure and unknown birth, her virtues, and my poor boy's love for her, would render her worthy to make a part of my family; but she is superior to my Felix in birth and fortune, could she assert her right!"

"From whence," asked Sir George, "did

"did you learn the account of her family? I thought her birth was acataleptic—not known even to Father Alberti; that her youth, beauty, and unprotected innocence, stimulated their benevolence, and thus she was eleemosynory."

"No, Sir George, her family is ancient and noble: the countess is fully acquainted with her story; she had it from Father Alberti. Had my poor maniac known her story, he would not have doubted his father's approbation of his love." Here all the tender, noble feelings of the father, and the man, swelled his bosom and illumed his countenance.

"But, my dear lord, you said, you were happy and distressed: how then have you found her?" asked the countess.

"Ah, my dear countess! how shall I tell? I found her near this village,

lage, with the sweetest cherub in her arms !"

" Oh ! my Felix, is it thus ?" sighed the countess : " And does a child of thine, and its mother, wander about, supported by the sparing hand of charity ? Take me, my lord, this instant to the dear, injured girl : let me pay them that love which is due to the wife and child of my Felix ! But has he not declared to you, my lord, that Imma was still innocent, still pure ?"

" He has, a thousand times ; and it pierced my heart when I saw he had not treated me with that confidence I thought he had. The sight of me affected Imma so much, that, in attempting to rise, she had nearly let the child fall, and she exclaimed, "O, my dear boy !" I took the infant from her, and carried it to the cottage, and in its heavenly face traced the fair beauties of my friend. A convent is her

her dread; for her first request was, that I would not let Father Alberti know where she was, lest he should shut her up.

"Well," said the earl, "the injured Imma we must recompense by our love and affection, and Felix's faults and crimes must be forgot in his sufferings. If the sight and security of Imma will bring sanity to my poor suffering maniac, all will be well: we will go and assure Felix, that Imma he will see to-morrow."

None felt the misfortunes and sufferings of Imma more severely than Lady Maria; and during supper she observed, she knew Imma to be purity and innocence itself; that her brother must have used either violence or stratagem to get her from Amalfi; "And I have great fear for his future happiness, as, in my opinion, her leaving him proves that he is not in possession of

of her heart and affections, for there is so much nature about Imma, I mean natural simplicity, that had she loved him, she never would have left him in the situation she was in."

"Indeed, Maria," said the earl, "you have raised a fear which I never thought of."

"No," replied the countess, "I have no such fear. No woman can hate the father of her child: the injury is forgot in the first matrimonial embrace, and the first kiss she imprints on her infant's cheek, seals his forgiveness, and (without neglect or ill treatment succeeds his fondness) each look of her infant, each smile and touch of its little hand, pleads with force to her heart, and turns indifference to the warmest affection."

"To your opinion I must bow, my countess," said the earl, "as in this case you must be the better judge.—To-morrow, we will go to Imma's cottage

tage, and begin the work of happiness." In the morning, Lady Maria and Lord Linton, went first to the cottage. When they entered, Imma was sitting by the fire, feeding the little Pheneas. Lady Maria fell on her knees, and threw her arms round her neck, and in one embrace, pressed, as she thought, both mother and child.

"O! my dear Imma," said she, "Why did not you come to me? Why have you wandered about among strangers? O! my dear brother, what happiness for you, were you capable of feeling it."

"Capable," said Imma; "What is the matter with Lord Stellor?"

Here the earl and countess entered. Imma gave the child to Lady Maria, and flew to meet the countess, with open arms; the countess received her; she sunk on her bosom, and cried "Forgive your Felix, forgive your son, and

pity

pity me!" "We do, we do," answered both the earl and countess, and asked, "Can you forgive him?"

"Yes, heaven knows my heart! I do; and I hope that Father Alberti and the abbot, will forgive us. May I ask where is Lord Stellor?"

The countess, in a few words, told her his situation, at which recital Imma fainted. Lissa brought drops; and when she recovered, she asked if she might see his lordship.

"And do you, Imma," said the earl, "feel so interested for him, as to wish to see him?"

"Yes, my lord; there was a time when I beheld him with aversion; when he forced me from Amalfi, from my home and friends, he was my aversion; I looked upon him as the worst wretch that ever lived: but now my heart is changed; I knew not that I loved him so much."

"Then,

"Then, we will go," said the countess; "the infant had better remain here, for the present. "I," said the happy Lissa, "will take care of him;" who, as soon as they had left the cottage, went to the convent to inform the abbot of what had past.

Lady Maria went to her brother's room; he was sitting at a table, Agatha by him, and with a pencil, was drawing a figure, which he said was Imma.

"And, my dear Felix, should you like to see Imma, in reality?"

"Where is Linton?"

"Never mind Linton: I will bring Imma, if you wish to see her; but how will you behave to her?"

"If I got her in my arms, she shall never leave me, without Linton is too strong for me, and takes her from me."

"Linton shall not come near you; be quiet, and I will fetch her."

She then led in Imma; the countess and

and said followed; notwithstanding she was prepared to see him [pale, emaciated, wasted by grief, and madness glowing at each eye—it was too much for her—she sunk, as he stretched his arms to embrace her. "O, my Imma," said he, and fell by her side; then took her in his arms, and held her so close to his breast, that it was with the greatest difficulty Lady Maria could apply salts to her nose; which, as she offered them, he endeavoured to put back with his hand, saying, "No, no, ye shall not touch her—never shall these hands loose her."

"But, my dear Felix, you will hurt her, if you hold her so fast."

"No! Does she say so? No, Felix can never hurt Imma; but she will run away from me again."

"No, indeed, I will not," said Imma, as she recovered; he then unclasped his hands, but still held her petticoat.

petticoat. The earl raised her from the ground, and seated her in a chair.—Lord Stellor, still holding her, seated himself by her; then looking firmly in her face for some time, said, "You are, indeed, my Imma—Will you never leave me again?"

"No," said she, "not without your consent."

"Then, we will never part. Will you, sir, permit me to detain her," said he, addressing the earl, with a supplicating look. It was the first proof he had given that he knew his father, which so overjoyed and affected him that he threw his arms round them, and pressing them tenderly, asked a blessing on them, bid them live and be happy. He then laid his head on Imma's shoulder, and shed tears. "Thank God!" said the weeping Agatha, who had witnessed the tender scene—"these tears are well, they promise returning reason."

"Ths

"This is a sight," said West, "most pleasing to my soul: my lord, weeping over her he loves. Never but once, since his illness, has he shed tears.—Often have I prayed that tears would come to his relief; but his grief was too great; it was not the whimpering grief of a love-sick boy, it was the heavy grief of a noble soul, which condemns its own actions; and fell into sudden madness, at the awful recollection."

Soon after, they all left the room but Agatha, who seated herself in a distant corner of the room, and with pleasure, watched the happy effects of Imma's presence.

Gregory's feelings were so tenderly affected, at the certain hope of again seeing Imma, the playfellow of his childhood, and companion of his youth, that when he heard her at the door, he felt it impossible to meet her, until the violence of his agitation was a little abated,

abatted, and he walked towards the garden.

When Lady Maria returned from her brother's room, she joyfully related to Gregory the manner and effects of Imma's introduction.

"Now," said she, "we will go and see the dear child."

"Child!" said Gregory, "impossible!"

"Yes! she has a beautiful little angel."

"Prince Gareci has often said, that he was sure that the only injury Lord Stellor had done Imma, was taking her from her friends, and giving the world suspicion, and I believed it."

"Let us go, and you shall see the dear angel."

As they left the room, they met Lord Linton, who walked with them. At the cottage they met the abbot and Father Basil. As they entered, Lissa

said, pointing to Lord Linton's father, "This is the gentleman who brought home Signora Imma;" the fathers bowed their heads. "Are you, son," said the abbot, "the person known by the name of Lord Stellor?"

"No, father, I am his friend."

"And where have you conveyed the maid Imma?"

"Maid!" said Lady Maria, to Gregory, who was kissing the infant Pheneas, "How can this be?"

Lord Linton described to the abbot the unhappy state of his friend, and the good effect Imma's company had on his mind.

"Blessed be the power of God! who, for his sins, like Nebuchadnezzar, has punished this young man with madness; and now, in his own time, restores him to life: for this young man must, like the unhappy Nebuchadnezzar, have been dead to his friends

and family, and also to himself during his state of insanity."

"We owe you much good, father," said Lady Maria, "for the care you have bestowed on Imma, and this dear child."

"Daughter, what we have done, was not for worldly praise, it was for the praise of God, and for the Christian love we feel for our fellow-creatures in distress."

"The earl, my father, will give you thanks; and also, by adding to your fund, enable you to continue such acts of charity as you may see fit. Will you go with us to the village, and I will carry the dear child?"

"We will, daughter, go and hail the maid Imma, and her returning happiness; but the child must stay with Lissa."

"Why, is it not Imma's child?"

"No, daughter. That child, has a much

much greater villain for his father than this Lord Stellor."

They all looked surprised.

"The mother of the child was with the maid Imma. She is a woman of great respectability, though unfortunate; this worthy father assisted her in the hour of trial; and she is now, even in this cold weather, gone a pilgrimage to Loretto, to expiate her crimes; and may the all-protecting influence of the Holy Virgin, go with, and support her, under the many bodily sufferings she must undergo in so long a journey!"

Lady Maria rejoiced to find that her brother was less guilty than she thought him; yet, she found something like disappointment, when she found the child was not Imma's; for she had already given to the infant, a part of that love she felt for her brother. She gave the child to Lissa, with a degree

of reluctance, and returned to the village with the fathers.

On her informing the countess of the discovery she had made, that the dear baby was not Imma's, she was surprised, and wished to hear from Imma an account of his mother.

The earl received the fathers with every mark of respect, and after some conversation, understanding that Father Basil had practised physic for many years, he requested him to visit his son.

Lord Stellor had not discovered the least symptom of insanity, from his first seeing Imma; he had sat, holding one of her hands, listening with minute attention, to her account of the difficulties and sufferings of Theresa and herself, from the time they left Manfredonia to their arrival at Lissa's cottage. She began with relating some of the conversations which passed between Theresa and herself, previous

to their leaving Manfredonia. Lord Stellor frequently shed tears, and as frequently blessed kind Providence for returning her to his arms. Imma, had not got half through her story, when the earl entered, with the abbot and Father Basil. "There, my lord," said Imma, rising, "are the good men who now protect and support me."

"No, not now, Imma; I will protect and support you now," answered Lord Stellor.

"My son," said the abbot, walking up to him, "May you be happy with the maid Imma—she deserves your love—she has done justice to your virtues—she has told me, that from you she did not run, but from herself—that you she did not fear, but herself. Now, my son, the woman who will not rely on her own strength, but flies from all possible danger, better guards her vir-

tue, than she who thinks herself invulnerable.'"

"Father," said Lord Stellor, "I am fully assured of Imma's worth and your goodness."

Here he stopped—a visible weakness came over him—and the pale tint, which joy had thrown on his cheek, fled; his head fell on Imma's bosom. Father Basil considered the symptoms visible throughout his frame: he then begged leave to administer to his Lordship, and requested he might be kept quiet; none remained with him but Imma and Agatha. The earl ordered the horses to be put to the carriage, and convey Father Basil to the convent. The abbot he prevailed on to remain and dine with him.

As all were anxious to know who and what Theresa was, and as Imma could not be asked, the abbot related her story,

story, as he had heard it from herself: also of the obdurate uncle's answer to his letter; that Theresa was gone a true penitent, to make good a vow Imma had made in her name; and Imma had promised to watch over her infant, until her return.

When Father Basil returned, Lord Stellor was got to bed, and every order strictly obeyed, which he gave respecting the regimen under which he laid his lordship: but no arguments could prevail on Lord Stellor to consent to Imma's quitting his apartment; the proposal affected him much, and threw him into a violent tremble. Father Basil advised that Imma should watch by his bed-side all night.

The next day, his lordship was visibly better, and requested Imma to finish the account of her flight from Manfredonia; she did, and he expressed a desire to see Theresa's child. Lissa

was ordered to bring him to the inn—he took it in his arms.

"It is like Theresa," said he, "and may you be as like her in soul as in face. No spark of your father's spirit, I hope, inhabits this little body. He kissed it, and gave it to Imma.

"Oh! my honoured mother," said he, hiding his face in her neck, "your son is not so great a villain as that Obreskoff; but had I followed his advice, I should have been. No, my mother, I loved Imma with purity and truth; and his advice had no effect on my conduct."

"Well, my Felix, your truth shall be rewarded. Imma shall be your's."

"Then, your son will be happy! And will my father consent? Dare I hope so?"

"Yes, Felix, the earl wishes it.—That and every thing else in his power will he do to make you happy."

Lord

Lord Stellor, whose spirits were very weak, was quite overcome by this excess of goodness; at length he raised his head from his mother's bosom, and turning towards Imma, held out his hand.

"Will you, my Imma? Can you forgive me? Will you, by joining your benign powers to my mother's, bid me live, and make that life happy, which, for your sake alone, I wish to preserve?"

Lady Maria took Imma's hand and led her to her brother: he embraced her, as did the countess.

"This," said Lord Stellor, "is the happiest moment of my life; the months of suffering I have past, are not too much for these delicious moments."

After much tenderness on all sides, the countess desired Lord Stellor would consent to Imma's retiring

for the night, as she was very much fatigued.

"Yes, mother, I can trust Imma with you, she is as safe as with me."

"Know, my lord," said Imma, "that my inclinations keep me with you now; when you was indifferent to me, I did not fear you; when I loved you, when my heart was your advocate, I fled; our loves are sanctioned by your friends; now I am honoured by their approbation, and they willingly accept me as their daughter, poor and desolate as I am, my wishes all centre here.—But to Father Alberti, the Abbot, and Metella, much is due from me; indeed, the whole convent demands my gratitude:—I am sensible they have suffered much on my account. Often my duty and gratitude directed me to write to them, but I fear their anger; and knew the inefficacy of my testimony to prove my innocence."

"I, my

"I, my Imma, will bear it all; on me shall fall their anger: I will be your shield and defender for life."

When Imma left Lord Stellor, eager to see Gregory, she ran to seek Lady Maria. As she entered the room the servant directed her to, a man caught her in his arms; she screamed, and pushed him from her. "What," said he, "Do not you know Gregory? who has travelled so many hundred miles to find you." She looked.

"It is, indeed, Gregory," said she, and embraced him; "and here I am, as pure and good, I hope, as when you last saw me."

They conversed some time; but as she was fatigued, she promised to give him a full account of her being taken from Amalfi, up to the hour in which Lord Linton found her; which she did, the next day, to the whole party.

The Countess consulted with the

earl and Sir George Philomath, about acquainting the Abbot and Father Alberti of the fortunate discovery of Imma. It was agreed, that Gregory had better go, attended by a servant, and take such letters as were necessary. The next day, when Agatha heard that Gregory was to leave them, she ran with great haste to the countess, and falling on her knees, begged he might not go.

"What, Agatha," said the countess, "is the reason of your request?"

"It is not yet, madam, time for me to tell; but it concerns me; it concerns you; it concerns all of us that he should stay; and the good man the abbot, who found him, I should like to see; or pray beg of him to send all particulars when, and where, he found him."

The countess sent for the earl and him at Agatha's request.

"And

"And what, Agatha, do you know of this young man?" asked the earl.

"I nursed him for years; I know his friends, but cannot discover them; but I will in a few weeks."

"To me, Agatha, you may," replied the earl; "me you may trust; for I must own, I feel a regard for him, and will do all in my power to serve him."

"Not yet, not yet, my lord, can I tell who he is; but in a few weeks, I hope to tell all I know. But, O, my God! What a trial will it be!"

The earl, was hurt at the violent agitation she was in, and promised her that Gregory should stay. A servant was then dispatched with letters to Amalfi, and every one was felicitating Gregory on the happy prospects he had of being restored to his friends. Lady Maria was so interested in the happiness of Gregory, that when she heard the account from the countess, she accompanied her

her expressions of joy with the most sisterly embrace.

The village was pleasantly situated; the air dry and salubrious; it was resolved that if a house could be procured for two or three months, they would fix their residence there; that Lord Stellor, who was recovering fast under Father Basil's care, might still have the benefit of his advice.

One day, while affairs were in this train, and search was making for a house, Sir George was conversing with Imma, and he asked her why she and Theresa left Madam Kenelm's house in so strange a manner.

"Why, Sir George, did I not inform you the other day, when I related our travels?"

"I had left the room at that part of your account, and stayed out some time; but I heard the account from Madam Kenelm, and think it was strange

strange you should leave her in such a manner."

"Did she not tell you, that she ordered us to leave her house?"—"No."

"A note was brought to us early in the morning, which ordered us to leave the house instantly. We obeyed; and the abbé drove us through the park. I have the note at the cottage, for Theresa took care of it, hoping one day to have it in her power to shew it to Madam Kenelm, and clear our characters."

"Oh, that vile abbé! the fustilarian! Oh, the skellum! the facinorous wretch! I will make his nocent, covenous practices known—such inopinate wickedness! Why, Imma, what more do you think he did? He told Madam Kenelm that you robbed her: you took a silver cup and spoons, besides the clothes Madam Kenelm sent you to put on."

"Blessed

"Blessed Virgin! does Mon. Abbé say we are thieves?"

"He does, he does; but I will eviscerate the business: I will go to Madam Kenelm, and produce irrefragable proofs of his wickedness—a thrasonical puppy! He—he had the temerity, the assurance to point out hallucinations in my translation of Abaris; but I will transport him—a rogue! I will defecate your characters. A skellum, to treat two helpless females with such ferity. If an atrophy had been your deaths, he would have gloried in the act; and to denigrate your characters, by saying you were thieves! I will go to Madam Kenelm this instant, a pedantic puppy! My translation bad!—the MSS. false! He a judge!—He know a false MS. from a true one! Shall he dare to give such an opinion? Signora, let me have the note: it is a forgery; it was never written by Madam Kenelm, I am sure.

sure. An impudent, bad-hearted fellow, he is always begrudging the poor, and condemning Madam Kenelm's erogations."

As soon as his choler was a little subsided, he went to the countess and informed her of his resolves. She was much hurt at the prejudice Madam Kenelm must feel against Imma and Theresa, from the impression the abbé's account must naturally have left on her mind.

"Go, Sir George," said the countess, "go and clear their characters—prove their innocence—free them from the shocking stigma. As for the unfortunate Theresa, my heart aches for her: what must she suffer this cold weather in her pilgrimage? Brought up with tenderness, and accustomed to every indulgence and comfort, how must her feet be blistered, and her tender limbs ache, in proceeding so many

many hundred miles, who before she left her uncle's house had never walked one. The account I have heard of her from Imma and Felix has distressed me much. It is to be lamented that bigotry and superstition should impose, or even sanction, such a penance. Paint to yourself, my dear Sir George, a delicate female, such as Theresa, but a few weeks a mother, turned out to wander, as I guess at least five hundred miles, in a most inclement season; nothing to subsist on but the charity of the zealot; sometimes resting in hovels, sometimes on the cottager's bed; climbing the dreadful Alps, each track lost in the drifted snow. How is it possible her frame can bear up against such hardships, while her mind is labouring under griefs ten times more dreadful!"

"Indeed, countess, I commiserate the poor Theresa, and fear, from what you

you say, the pilgrimage will prove inimious for her; yet I hope, that that Power, to whose honour she is sacrificing her health and personal comforts; to whom she hourly deprecates; whose anger it is the wish of her soul to appease—I say, that I trust and hope, countess, that that Power will be her fulciment. My carriage I see is ready: dear countess, adieu!"

Sir George was joyfully received by M. Kenelm and Prince Gareci, who had felt a considerable degree of anxiety on account of Lord Stellor, and wished much to hear of him. Sir George then paid his respects to Madam Kenelm, and inquired after the acataleptic lady, as he always called her; and was informed, that she still kept her room and her bed the greatest part of the day, and that Madam Kenelm was not yet acquainted with her story. Sir George, by way of answering the many

manyquestions put to him by the prince and Madam Kenelm, begun a circumstantial account of all that had happened from the time he left Madam Kenelm's house until his parting with his friends at the little village, Nan. When he came to that period of his detail in which Imma was found, Madam Kenelm clapped her hands, and exclaimed, "Thank God!" The abbé turned pale, and William said, "Now, mother, you may send for your cup and spoons."

She smiled and answered, "I shall have them, no doubt."

At the account of Lord Stellor's recovery, the prince expressed as much joy, as his sister had done when she heard Imma was found.

"Now, madam, I have informed you of the approaching happiness of my friends; nothing gloomy in their prospects, but the unfortunate Theresa's

resa's wanderings: this pilgrimage she has undertaken distresses them."

"Do you approve of these pilgrimages, Mons. Abbé?" asked William Kenelm.

"Yes, sir; and the longer and more severe the journey, the fitter for great sinners."

"You think so, do you?" said Sir George, most terrificly contracting his brows, at the same time taking a paper from his pocket-book, still looking sternly. "Is that your writing, madam?" presenting it to Madam Kenelm: "Do me the favour to say?"

"This is not my writing, Sir George: what can it mean? Read it, my dear."

She gave it to M. Kenelm: he read it, and gave it to the prince; who, after reading it, presented to the abbé: his countenance was still more livid.

"Do

"Do you know that paper?" asked Sir George.

"No, sir," he answered, trembling.

"You do not—then where did you get it? for you certainly gave it to Theresa."

"Me give it to Theresa! No: Sir George; this is another proof of her arts."

"No, Mons. Abbé, it is another proof of your wickedness, which you cannot long deny. You called them before sun-rise—you put this note under the door—you pulled Imma down stairs, and drove them through the park! They entreated to see Madam Kenelm, but you said she would not suffer it. The clothes, spoons, and cups, you best know what is become of them."

"Will you dare, Sir George, to accuse me, a son of the church, of such acts?"

"You

"You skellum! You nefandous villain! The church is an unhappy mother to have such a son as you! You cannot deny my accusation: all the company must have seen your countenance at the sight of that effraiable note! You know, and we see, that you are nocive; and I swear by this hand, if you do not declare your motive for driving these helpless women from this hospitable roof, I will emplead you, and lay you in durance, from which you shall never be eliminated!—I ask your pardon, M. Kenelm, for taking the liberty to use correptory language to any person under your patronage; but you see, that, however my feelings may be hurt, or my humanity wounded, that I never displode my anger. I am cool and soft in my accusations: I am a plain, mild man."—M. Kenelm bowed—Sir George continued:

"Now,

"Now, Mons. Abbé, declare the truth."

"Sir George, I shall make no confessions to you: I only say that these women have formed a false story; and none but those who have a right to inquire into my conduct will I answer." Saying this, he quitted the room.

"Madam," said William Kenelm, "I have been looking at this writing some time, and plainly see many strokes which resemble the abbé's writing."

"I have no doubt, nephew," said the prince, "of its being his: as to the robbery alleged them, it is a mystery we must yet fathom."

"Indeed, brother, I always thought he possessed a malignant spirit; but could not think he would machinate aught against two unoffending women; at least they could not have offended him: but the robbery is most unaccountable."

"You,

"You, madam, I suspect, are the offending person," replied William; "but on them his vengeance fell, because you were above his reach. I was hurt at his behaviour in the arbour, on the evening after Imma and Theresa came."

"I am convinced," said M. Kenelm, "that he is a bad man, overbearing and impertinent, and by far more master of this house than myself, at least he has assumed too much for some time past. I will send for him to my study and dismiss him to-morrow—he shall go."

In a short time after M. Kenelm left the room, Ursula came running in, out of breath. In one hand she held the spoons and cup, in the other, several articles of dress.

"As sure, madam, as Paul was a sinner and a saint, here are the things I told you them women had stolen! Dear, innocent creatures, how have I

wished them to suffer for their wickedness!"

"Where, Ursula, did you find them?"

"Why, madam, Leolin went to tell Mons. Abbé to go to my master's study. He then came running to me, 'Ursula, Ursula!' says he, 'as sure as these eyes saw old Mildred's ghost, they have seen the silver cup and spoons you lost!' Where, where, my lad? cries I. 'In the abbé's room,' says he. So away I went, and may the wicked weep, madam, if I did not find them all there!"—"Is it possible!"

"Yes, madam, some in his box and some out, for he is packing up his things, I wean. So up I caught them, and away I ran, looking behind me for fear some of his spirits should stop me. Oh! I always thought them round things, which he once told me was heaven, and earth, and the compasses, and the books with frightful marks in them,

them, could belong to no good man; I hope young master wont touch them. When he is gone, Saint Michael defend us. I hope Mon. Abbé, will not set a spell over me for taking the things out of his room. I will lock myself up in my room until he is gone."

Away went Ursula to secure herself: when she met M. Kenelm and the Abbé at the door, she screamed, and dropped on her knees; they passed on to the room.

"My dear, said M. Kenelm, "the Abbé has, in my opinion, cleared himself; and a gentleman's character must not be sacrificed to the tales of two wandering girls, therefore I think it would be unjust to dismiss him. I received him into my house in the character of a gentleman: nay, more, in the sacred character of a son of the church! and I am not willing to disgrace him on slight proofs."

"Well, my dear, if Mons. Abbé can

as clearly account for those things being found in his room, I shall be satisfied, and promise him that respect and esteem which is due to a good man."

The Abbé started, turned pale, and left the room.

"You see, my brother," said the prince, "that he is guilty: his conduct is incomprehensible."

"I see it, and am shocked. The art and address with which he told me his suspicions, and his certain knowledge that Theresa was an abandoned woman, is astonishing:——Imma, he said, was something better, but not good. How were these things discovered?"

On being informed, he exclaimed,

"Is there in Nature such infernal deceit?"

"Sir," said William, after a pause, "shall I go and speak to Mons. Abbé? Perhaps he is in want of some consolation:

tion: it must be a hardened calous mind, that does not feel self-reproach at times; and I think if ever his conscience condemns him, it must be now; if so, it will be the time to save him."

"Go, my son; the sorrows even of the wicked should be softened. Your attention may be balm to his conscience. If you see the least signs of remorse, urge him to declare his motives for such conduct, and promise him our forgiveness and friendship, if you think he may in future be worthy. At least, my boy, from you something is due.—In his conduct towards you, he has fully performed his duty. He is a man of great merit, and has been indefatigable in his endeavours to improve the little you possess, and he has succeeded beyond my hopes; although the man, in this act towards the two distressed women, has shewn himself to be a most malignant, cruel, wicked disposition, yet the good he has done must not be

forgotten; his virtues must be placed in view, to balance his vices, though I fear they will prove light."

"My dear," said Madam Kenelm, "I do believe, that in this case, his wish to prove that my ideas and pursuits of charity are wrong and misplaced, is his principal motive; and Madam Theresa's cold, short, and contemptuous answers, to his many impertinent questions, determined him to make them his victims and his proofs; and I acknowledge that his care of our son, and long residence with us, pleads much, but cannot either extenuate his crime, nor veil his natural bad disposition. But go, my son, offer him your friendship——"

"I hope, sir," said Sir George, addressing M. Kenelm, "I have not offended, by mildly interrogating Mons. Abbé; if you feel I have taken a liberty, place it to the account of friendship, for I must be interested for her who

is

is so dear to the son of my friend. The purity of Imma's character is of consequence to the earl, as she is soon to become his daughter: the Abbé certainly has done all in his power to denigrate it; friendship like mine, in this business, will not suffer me to be adiaphorous. I undertook to depurate their fame, and to eviscerate into his motives for thus endeavouring to work their deletion."

"Sir George," replied Mr. Kenelm, "you have acted perfectly right. The Abbé, I have no doubt, deserves all you have said, and much more. And the earl, you say, has consented to his son's marrying Imma."

"Yes, sir, he is convinced that without her, Lord Stellor will never enjoy his health or senses: it is wonderful the effect her conversation had on him. In half an hour his dementation gave way, and sanity returned; nor has he

had the least symptom of a return of derangement since."

"But the birth of Imma, Sir George," said Madam Kemelm; "that is obscure, or at least unknown, for so she told me."

To herself it is unknown, and to the world in general; but the countess is well acquainted with it, and informed me that it is noble, but for private reasons must remain a secret."

William returned, with tears in his eyes. "O! sir, never saw I such violent ravings of passion. Monsieur Abbé is cursing his folly and stupidity. When I approached him to speak, he put me back, nor would he hear a word. I begged him to moderate his grief——"

"Grief,' said he; 'think you that I grieve? No; for what? No, no, I execrate the infernals for leaving me open to detection; but no matter, they

have

have served me before and will again.' He uttered this with so ferocious a look, and violent distortion of features and limbs, that I was shocked, and left him till his passion abates."

"Well, son, he must take his own way."

Madam Kenelm was very desirous to know the particulars of Imma's wedding, and Sir George informed her.

"The earl, madam, wishes to remain at Nau two or three months, for the purpose of having father Basil's advice for Lord Stellor, who is in a very weak state; also to see Father Alberti, who he has sent for; and as there should be three reasons to make a motive perfect, Theresa's child is the third.—Imma cannot be prevailed upon to leave it, for she solemnly vowed to take care of it until her return, and the servants are in search of a house."

"I am sure," said the prince, "there

can be no house at or near Nau, fit to accommodate such a family. Suppose, sister——"

"Stop, brother; none of your proposals. This house will be better than your's, because it is nearer: I must therefore beg that the countess will oblige us so far, and remove here. You have no objection, my dear, have you, to my proposal?"

"No, my Althea, none, but join my request to your's; and as the distance is too great for Father Basil to make his daily visits to Lord Stellor, I beg he may take up his residence here, also Theresa's child and nurse."

Sir George, not being over partial to the inconveniencies of a village inn, accepted the offer in the earl's name.

The first news in the morning was that Mons. Abbé, at an early hour, ordered the coachman to put his horses to the carriage, and take him to the first post-town.

post-town. He left a letter for M. Kenelm, written in a haughty style, saying, he was going to France, where he hoped to find firmer friends, and more justice and gratitude, and respect, than Germany had afforded him.

"Ah!" said Sir George, "France is the only place where talents like his will find encouragement. His black spirit will find ample room to stalk abroad, and prowl for prey. The demon of malignity, in the person of ..... will take him by the hand, as his younger brother, and place him at the head of his diabolical plan."

Sir George ordered his carriage, and as soon as breakfast was dismissed, he took his leave, saying, he should haste to bear Madam Kenelm's wishes to the countess.

CHAP. VI.

THE invitation was received by all the party with pleasure, and the abbot readily consented to Father Basil's attending Lord Stellor, to whom the earl made a handsome present, for his kindness to Imma. Joseph, with great reluctance, bid farewell to Imma, his mother, and the little Pheneas; but the earl, to console him for the loss of his mother, and to reward his charitable heart, gave him a sum sufficient to purchase two cows and two horses, and guaranteed the rent of some land, with which Joseph commenced farmer, and his only sister left her place, to supply her mother's.

Monsieur Kenelm's house, though of a princely size, was nearly filled.—

With the most pleasing hospitality were the whole party welcomed by M. Kenelm and his lady. Prince Gareci joyfully received his old friends Lord Linton, Lord Stellor, and Gregory. The meeting between Imma and Madam Kenelm was truly grateful. Imma had prepossessed the countess and Lady Maria in favour of Madam Kenelm; but much as they were taught to expect, much more they found, nor was the earl less pleased with M. Kenelm and the prince.

Lord Stellor was extremely weak, and the journey had fatigued him.—As soon as he had made his bow to the lady of the house, he retired to the apartment prepared for him, where the prince followed as soon as he had paid his respects to the rest of the company. Agatha, with West, was busily employed in arranging phials, jellies, and juleps, when turning round, on hearing the

the door open, she saw the prince enter, and tenderly embraced Lord Stellon. She caught West's arm, and with a look of terror, cried out, "Save me! Save me! What do I see? The father"—Here she stopped; her voice failed her. The prince looked, and said——

"Bless me, Agatha, is it you? Be not alarmed; time has done much for me and my sorrows; and now I can talk, with composure, on the death of my boy; and often have I wished to hear from you the account of his death. To-morrow, you must indulge me with a full account."

Agatha, trembling, left the room, and retired to her own, but she could find no rest in her bed; sleep fled her eyes, and morning came, and found Agatha unable to leave her bed.—Father Basil visited her, and found her in a violent fever; it encreased, and at

the

the end of a week he thought her in danger: each day, when he administered to the malady which infected her body, he forgot not the ethereal spark which actuated it.

"Father," said the sinking Agatha, "I have a sad account to settle."

"Begin, my child," said the good man, "it cannot impede your recovery, but will render your future life happy should you live, and should it please the *Father* of *all* to call you hence, you will be prepared."

"I will, Father, this day."

"What confessor will you have?"

"None, but yourself, father; but first, will you ask Prince Gareci, the earl and countess, Lord Stellor, and Gregory, to meet here in my apartment: M. and Madam Kenelm may be present, if they please; the great crime I have to account for, concerns them all."

Father

Father Basil was all astonishment, and promised to bring them.

Lord Stellor had twice joined the family at dinner, but generally left the table as soon as the cloth was removed: he was about to rise, when Father Basil made Agatha's request known; they were all surprised, but none refused to attend. Gregory's heart beat high with tender expectation, and his knees nearly refused to support him up stairs.

When they entered the room, Agatha groaned, and hid her face; father Basil encouraged her to speak: the countess approached the bed, and soothed her; her agitation was violent, her face was convulsed; she breathed short, and with great difficulty.

"Good Heavens!" said Gregory, "any one would think she was struggling to declare some very great crime."

"It

"It is, it is, my dear child," said she in a distracted tone, holding out her arms, then throwing them round his neck; "you must plead for me, you must plead to your father for me; and you, my other child," holding out her hands to Lord Stellor, he drew near; "Will you save me from your father's anger?"

"God defend me," said the countess, "what can this mean?"

Agatha beckoned, they all drew round her; she took Lord Stellor's hand and put it into the prince's, saying "He is your son." She then gave Gregory to the earl and countess, saying, "He is your's." She then fainted. The countess and Lord Stellor also sunk lifeless on the bed. Madam Kenelm rung the bell; Ursula came and procured salts and hartshorn. The painful sensations which possessed every breast, cannot be described. The prince panted in the most acute misery; a

son

son put into his hand, who he had for some time known as the son of another. The earl, distracted at the thought of a beloved son being torn from him, and another, a foundling, forced on him as his child. "It is not, it cannot be my child," said the earl, embracing Lord Stellor; "This is my child," "No," said Agatha, recovering, "if you will patiently hear me, I will explain the whole." They all, with ghastly looks, and trembling limbs, seated themselves round the bed.

"You must remember," said Agatha, addressing the earl and countess—"When you sent for me to take your child, which is him (pointing to Gregory) that I had a son of Prince Gareci (which is him)" pointing to Lord Stellor.

"I remember him well," said the countess, "and it was your having the son of so respectable a nobleman, and your living in a style so much above common

common life, induced us to consign our infant to your care, rather than risque his life, by travelling at so early an age."

"When your child," continued Agatha, "was a twelve month old, you left Bologna to attend your husband there, M. Tyne, at Venice, where he was doing business, I was told for his king; two years you was absent; to England, I believe, you went, during which, these two dear children grew together, and loved each other, and God only knows, how I loved them. My neighbour, who lived at the next house, was often displeased at the noise the dear children made when at play in the garden, and frequently would scold them, which the maid, who was always with them, could not bear, and retorted. One day, they had a violent quarrel, when she threw a stick at the servant, which struck one of the children;

dren; the poor girl, in a rage, threw it back again with violence; it struck the woman; she screamed; her husband came to her assistance, and abused the girl. From that day I did not let the children play in the garden, till they had left the house, which I knew they were about to do: they were low people, and the man a bad character. He had for some years been a *sbirre*, but for using some poor men ill, whom he had taken, he was broke. The day after the quarrel, this man came to complain of the ill usage his wife had received from our maid; my poor husband said she deserved it; he left us in a passion, vowing he would be revenged, and he kept his word. In two months after they left Bologna, two men jumped over the garden hedge; one of them carried the maid to the bottom of the garden, which was of great extent, and tied her to a tree, while the other caught

caught up that child there, my Felix, who is now called Gregory, and ran off: that dear boy Antonio, frightened to see the maid and his companion carried away, came crying in doors, but could not talk sufficiently plain to make me understand: my other servant and myself ran into the garden, and it was some time before we could find the girl; her hands were drawn back and tied to a tree, and her jaws were extended by a long ball of rag. All inquiries were vain; no tidings could we hear. Many weeks did my poor husband ride night and day in search of him. Some time after, the valet of Prince Cordani called, and informed us that prince Gareci was dead, that he did not survive his wife's death but a few days. It was then I determined to give the dear Antonio to you, and told my husband I would: he, poor man, did not approve of the cheat, but I could not bear the thoughts of

of relating to you such cruel tidings. About five months after you returned to Bologna for your child; never shall I forget the pangs at my heart, when I put the dear child in your arms as your own. You saw my distress, but you thought it was on account of my husband, who then lay on his death-bed, and he, poor soul, died about a week after of a broked heart, for the loss of dear Felix. I then, to my great dread, heard that the Prince Gareci was living; see him I could not; so I wrote a letter to him, and another to Madam Kenelm, who was then in Russia, saying Antonio and my husband both died of a fever, and that I had left Bologna."

"I must inform you, countess," said Madam Kenelm, "that a few months after our marriage, M. Kenelm was appointed plenipotentiary to the court of Russia, where we remained near five

years,

years, and there certainly I received the account of my nephew's death, whom I never saw. Now, Agatha, proceed."

"I then left Bologna, nor could I bear to think on a place where I had seen so much sorrow. I settled at Urbino, living on the little property I had, now and then adding to it by attending a sick lady or gentleman. When I saw Lord Stellor, I had such unaccountable feelings, and trembled so, I could hardly hold a cup; but feelings ten thousand times more dreadful did I suffer on seeing Gregory's arm; the bunch of grapes, which I think your ladyship must remember, struck me so forcibly, that I was sure he was the dear boy I had lost, he is so like his father: the third shock, was your arrival at Urbino, for I knew not that you was a countess, or that my Antonio was a lord: my next trouble was how to find

find Prince Gareci, but after many painful debates, I determined to do justice to the foundling Gregory, for which purpose two weeks ago I wrote a letter to the prince, and sent it to Bologna; but Providence has brought us all here together, and I have made all the restitution in my power for a crime which did not originate in myself, and I hope for your forgiveness before I die." Here Agatha ceased, quite overcome by the exertion.

The countess, after a pause, looking tenderly on Lord Stellor, threw her arms round his neck, saying,

"And are you not my boy? Must I give up all my heart held dear to another? And must we be for ever separated? Here, Prince Gareci, I give to you a treasure, a plant of my own rearing, a son worthy such a father. And can you, my lord," addressing the earl,

"part

"part with such a son? But where is my own? Let me look and love him. Come my Felix."

The countess would have clasped him in her arms, but Gregory fell on his knees.

"Let me, madam, at your feet return thanks to that Providence who has preserved me, and at last so wonderfully restored me to my parents, and brought me from seclusion."

The countess raised and pressed him to her breast, then presented him to the earl, who embraced him tenderly. The countess again pressed him in her arms, and kissed him most affectionately.

"Be sparing, my dear madam, of your caresses; or I shall expire with rapture. These are the first maternal embraces I was ever sensible of, and sure, if every son feels the pleasurable emotions I do, none would fly from

them—none would seek for other joys."

"Now, my dear Felix (for I have a Felix still), let me see the mark of grapes on your arm: often have I looked for them on my other boy's arm, but thought time had worn them out."

He pulled up his shirt sleeve—the grapes were to be seen plainly, but much fainter than when Agatha saw them; for, like other marks of that natural, when the fruit was out of season, they gradually disappeared. Thus, while the countess was endeavouring to reconcile herself to the change, Prince Gareci was indulging in the most rapturous joys, and embracing his new-found son, then his sister and brother, intreating them to partake of his joy; but his son coolly returned his embrace.

"Why," said he, "why, my Antonio,

nio, my son, my new-found boy, are you so lifeless? Why so indifferent to my happiness?"

"Pardon me, sir," said Antonio, "I cannot so easily transfer my affections: from my infancy have I been accustomed to respect and love the countess and earl as my parents, and by them have been treated with the greatest tenderness and affection, and to them I owe every duty due to parents; but it shall be my care to teach my heart its duty: yet I hope you will not prohibit me from paying a small share of love to those, to whom, a short time ago, I thought it only due. The kindness and friendship you evinced for me at Manfredonia attached me much to you; and I then thought that, next to Lord Linton, you was placed in my heart; you now shall take precedence of all, and of my filial obedience you shall not complain. But,

Oh, my mother!" continued he, taking the countess by the hand, "for you must be my mother still; or I shall be a loser by the change, how am I to be disposed of? Will the prince, my father, be as kind as you? And the earl, will he give Imma to my love? Will he condescend to take an unknown as his daughter? Will he make me happy?"

"Do not doubt it, my son, my life," said the countess: "leave that to me."

Ursula, when she assisted the countess and Antonia, stayed long enough in the room to understand the cause of their affliction. She then ran into the garden to find Lady Maria, Imma, and the three gentlemen, who, it being a fine afternoon, were walking. She searched every corner of the garden, then the pleasure ground, where she found them in pleasant chat.

"Oh!

"Oh! my dear ladies—" said she, holding her sides, coughing and breathing short.

"Why, Ursula," said Sir George, "you are quite archelous: what is the matter?"

"Oh dear! such wonders! such strange things!"

"What, what! Dear good Ursula, tell us."

"Why, as sure as Lot drank wine and sinned, the prince and earl have changed sons! And there is such work!"

"Change sons!" said William:—"what do you mean? My uncle has no son."

"Yes, as sure as David was the son of Jesse, Lord Stellor is the prince's son! And so, my lady, you have lost your brother."

"Let us go," said Lady Maria, "and see what has happened."

"Why, just as I say: you have lost your brother, and signora her husband, and Prince Gareci has found his son."

When they reached the house, Imma went to her chamber, for the last speech of Ursula had wrung her heart, and she begged Lady Maria to let her know the truth of Ursula's report. Lady Maria, Lord Linton, Sir George, and William, entered the room just as each were assuring Agatha of their forgiveness.

Antonio threw himself into Lady Maria's arms, and sighed deeply: then said:—

"I am no longer your brother, my dear Maria! No longer shall I be allowed the privilege of thus embracing you."

"My dear Felix, what is this I hear?"

"No, nor is Felix my name. Oh! my dear, my friend Linton, you will be

be still my friend: this change of parents will not change your friendship."

The prince then went to them.—"Give me joy, my dear Linton, of my new-found son. But why, my dear Antonio, these marks of sorrow in your face?"

"Pardon me, my father," returned he, "give me the remainder of this day to reconcile myself to so wonderful a change: to-morrow I will be all your's."

He then left the room, and sought Imma; he found her bathed in tears, wishing to know, yet dreading to hear what had taken place.

"Oh, my Felix!" said she, as he entered, "and am I indeed to lose you? And is our fate decided? Are we to be separated?"

"No, my love! I will renounce father, friends, and all the world, rather than relinquish you! No, my

Imma, nothing on earth shall separate us again."

Father Basil, who was under some apprehensions for his patient's health, entered the room, begged him to quiet his fears, and declared it was his opinion, that the prince would not disapprove of their union. At supper, from which Imma and Count Antonio excused themselves, Prince Garegi related the whole of Agatha's tale to Lady Maria, Lord Linton, Sir George, and William. Lady Maria was much affected for she doted her supposed brother with tenderness.

In the morning Father Basil declared, that he feared Count Antonio would have a relapse of his disorder, and if that should be the case there would be little hopes of his reason ever returning.

The countess with aching heart went to the prince's apartment, and informed

him

him of Father Basil's opinion. "Good Heavens!" said the prince, "was I made so exaltedly happy last night only to be plunged into a greater depth of misery—am I again to mourn my child? Nineteen years has he been dead to me! Nineteen years have I mourned him, and last night was his resurrection—last night was he given to my arms: it brought new life to my soul, and new blood into my veins; and now must I lose him again? How cruel is fate! This is done to make me more exquisitely miserable. What, my dear countess, can be done to save my boy?"

"Nothing but what the earl and I did before—give him Imma: on her hangs his life; and without her he will be lost to himself, to his friends, and the world."

"My dear countess, did he suppose that I should wish to set their union

aside? God forbid! What the earl and you have promised him, I will fulfil. Had I known he had entertained a doubt of my intentions, I would have explained myself last night; he should not have passed one hour in miserable suspense. Let us, my dear countess, go and make him happy."

"My dear Antonio," said the prince, as he entered, "I am sorry to find that you are indisposed. I did hope that you would have been well enough to have paid a visit with Imma and me to Burgden castle, and view the grounds; for if you and Imma like the situation, you shall reside there part of each year, and the other part at Bologna."

"Imma, sir, did you say?—that Imma and I should reside at your castle! And are you so condescending and good to make me thus happy, and will bless me with Imma for life?"

"For

"For life, my son, and long may it be—long may you and Imma be happy!"

"Then, my dear father, I am well, or soon shall be; I will rise, and bear to Imma the happy account."

"No, I must send for her; and Father Basil must say if he would have you rise."

Imma came with eyes swelled and red, cheeks pale, spirits low.

"My dear," said the prince, taking her hand, "your countenance informs me, that you have encouraged the same fears which my dear boy has: to make you both happy will be my supreme delight; and, in presence of the countess and Father Basil, I join your hands, and promise that as soon as you are in perfect health, that your marriage shall be solemnized both in the Romish and Protestant church, agreeable to your different faiths; and I trust

that, hereafter, religion will never make the least difference, or cause the least altercation between you."

Count Antonio wept tears of gratitude on his father's hand as he pressed it to his heart. Each day brought him additional health and strength, and increase of love to the countess, for her new-found Felix; in external beauties he equalled her lost Felix, and in mental accomplishments he might be said to go before him; yet both were amiable, and both were learned. As to the graces, there he failed; the homely, uncouth manners of a monastery hung about him. He had long seen the difference between the easy, gay, and graceful attitude of a court-bred lord, and the heavy, stiff, upright walk of a conventual, and he secretly wished to reform himself; but this became the task of Lady Maria; sometimes Lord Linton assisted; nor was the task ungrateful,

grateful, he profited so fast by their lessons.

The time passed, bringing increase of happiness, for several weeks with very little variety, except a few visits the company made in small parties to the strange lady. Emma and Lady Maria generally saw her once a day; and of the gentlemen, Sir George was the most constant in his visits. Her health was much better, but by no means re-established. At length, a visit was proposed by the prince to Burgden castle, and Sir George did all in his power to prevail on the acataleptic lady to accompany them; but she excused herself, as her health was by no means equal to the journey at that cold season, but she requested Sir George to cause a letter to be forwarded to Vienna for her. She said it was to an aunt of her's, the only relation she had; nor was she certain that she was living,

living, as she had not heard of her for sixteen years. Sir George promised to be the bearer of it himself. The lady was flattered by his kindness, and, in return, disclosed to him her name and rank; which he promised to keep secret until his return.

Ten days did the prince entertain his friends sumptuously, and consulted Imma on the beautifying the rooms and grounds. Confined all her life to the white walls of a low-built cottage, all beyond it was magnificent in her eyes; she therefore left all to the superior taste of the countess, Lady Maria, and Count Antonio.

On their return, Imma flew to her dear Plineas, and Lord Stellor to Agatha's chamber, for he adored her as his guardian angel—the ruler of his fate—the fixer of his fortune; and he vowed to protect her for life. He had the happiness to find her nearly recovered.

vered. Sir George parted with his friends at Burgden castle, and proceeded to Vienna, agreeable to the promise he made to the strange lady.

The day after their return to M. Kenelm's, the servant arrived from Amalfi, with accounts that Father Alberti was at Nau, and would proceed to M. Kenelm's the next day.

Imma's heart began to palpitate, and as the hour drew nigh in which he was expected, she went to her room.—When the carriage came in sight, the countess went to inform her.

"Pray, my dear madam," said Imma, "speak to Father Alberti. I cannot see him until you have made my peace; for indeed he will think me guilty, until you prove my innocence."

The countess returned to the drawing-room, where she found Father Alberti, Metella, and a gentleman. After saluting the countess, the good

old

old man asked, "Where is Imma? Where is my child?"

"Father," said the countess, "she is well; and I have no doubt but the letters we sent convinced you of her innocence, and her leaving Amalfi was by force; and on the youth you know as our son, rests all the blame: but for him much may be said; for the honour, tenderness, and respect, with which he treated her when she was in his power, deserves praise, and even forgiveness."

"And that he shall have," said Father Alberti; "but pray let me see my child."

The countess sent for Imma: she entered, holding Lady Maria's arm. Father Alberti embraced her: then taking her hand, he presented her to the gentlemen, saying, "Count Orsato, this is your daughter, whom Providence has preserved for you."

"My

"My father! And have I then a father?"

"Yes, my child!" said he, tenderly pressing her in his arms, "I am your father! And to Metella and the good fathers of Amalfi am I indebted for a daughter: but for their care you would long ere this have been with your mother, in the regions of bliss."

"Oh, my mother!" said Antonio, pressing the countess's hand, "here is a new trial, I fear; for I despair of meeting in the world a third kind father: he, too sure, will take Imma from me."

"Such fears you must not indulge, my dear: at first he may be a little averse to your union, yet, no doubt, the many advocates you have will prevail."

Metella then expressed her honest joy at once more holding Imma in her arms.

They

They were then joined by M. and Madam Kenelm, who congratulated Imma on her good fortune.

Antonio sighed, and Imma did not look quite so happy as most orphans would on being owned by a rich and titled father. All assembled at supper, and a visible gloom clouded every face, but Count Orsato's, for all knew and felt the dreadful suspense Antonio laboured under.

"My dear Imma," said Count Orsato, taking her hand, for she was seated by his side, "you do not smile on your new-found father. Why this serious look? You are too grave."

"Oh, my father!" said Imma, "do not lay it to the account of indifference, or insensibility; the name of father sounds awful on my ears. I know the many tender duties due from a child to a parent, and fear I shall fail in some of them."

"No,

"No, my love, the few I shall exact, you will I dare say cheerfully perform. We will in a few days set off for Tarento, and in our way make a visit to the good abbot at Amalfi. At Tarento you shall reign a little queen, over domain enough to satisfy any moderate ambition."

"Unfortunately, signore, not a single spark of ambition glows in my breast. Metella's cottage, or any cottage, with the friends of my heart, is the height of my wishes."

"Time, my dear, will change your opinions."

"Time will never change my heart; it may admit the claims of a parent, but never will it relinquish its present attachments and friendships."

"Ingratitude, my Imma, I would not teach you; and every attachment you have formed I will countenance and encourage, which militates not against

against my rank, and my future prospects."

Imma, violently agitated by hope and fear, wishing to declare her sentiments for Count Antonio, but delicacy forbid her: she sunk exhausted in her father's arms, faintly repeating, "All my friends are noble."

Count Antonio, who had sat during the conversation, in a panting, half-dying state, was at her side in a moment, took her hand, and tenderly cried, "My Imma, my life, my soul, look up; look on your Antonio, and bid him live!" She gave him her hand, then sighed—"My father!—Plead to my father." Madam Kenelm rung the bell for her maid; Ursula came, and as she took Imma from Orsato, she exclaimed, "Holy Virgin, if you suffer wrong to assail this angel, I shall think you have forsook your sex, and will never pray to you again. Now Signore Antonio

Antonio take this arm, no one else is necessary." They left the room, followed by the Countess, Lady Maria, Father Alberti, and Basil.

"Whose son is this Antonio?" said Orsato.

"He is my son, count," said the prince.

Count Orsato bowed.

"And a most amiable young man he is," replied the earl.

"No doubt," returned Orsato, "but he looks like an Englishman."

"He was educated in England, under my eye, by a most amiable and good man."

Orsato bowed again; and after some general conversation, they retired for the night.

Three days passed, and each increased Imma's indisposition, and Count Antonio's anxiety; and Father Basil urged the prince to endeavour by speaking to

Coun

Count Orsato, to gain his consent to their union, as the only means of preserving their lives; for he plainly saw that grief was again undermining Count Antonio's health and reason.

Prince Gareci, a second time alarmed for his son's life, consulted with the earl how he should proceed, and they agreed that to apply to Count Orsato was the only step.

They found him in conversation with Lord Linton, and joined in the subject, when in a short time they led him to speak of Imma.

"It is strange," said Count Orsato, "that having found a father should give her no pleasure; she has been ill ever since the discovery, each day worse, and now she cannot leave her bed. It is true I am to her as a strange man, for I have not seen her since she was two years old. But where is the instinct, the strong impellings of the heart,

heart, which I have heard of when two nearly related meet, ignorant of their consanguinity?"

"Imma, no doubt," said the earl, "feels all this, and is truly happy in having found a father; and it is the high sense she feels of the duty due to a parent, which causes her present indisposition; and she is not the only one who is sinking under the fear that her obedience to you, will oblige her to be unjust to another."

"I hope not earl, I should be unhappy was my child unjust; but say, sir, what is it that afflicts her?"

The earl then detailed the whole of Antonio's affection for Imma; his taking her from Amalfi; her dislike to him; then her growing love; her flying from him with Theresa; his madness, and every subsequent occurrence: he concluded with saying, it was Father Basil's opinion, and he himself was convinced

convinced that should he withhold his consent, or even keep Antonio a few days longer in suspense, he would be for ever lost. In so pathetic a manner did the earl describe his madness, and the effect the appearance of Imma had on him, that Count Orsato shed tears many times.

"Earl," said Orsato, "I am at a loss to understand these things. Father Alberti told me, and your letter confirmed it, that my Imma was taken away by a Lord Steller, son of an English earl, and I presume you are that earl; and now it is Prince Gareci's son, Count Antonio, you have been speaking of. How is this?"

The prince then related to him the strange discovery and exchange which had taken place since the letters were sent to Amalfi.

"And I trust," said Prince Gareci, "that my son will be esteemed a good

match for Count Orsato's daughter, at least equal to the Earl of Cleobright."

"I must beg leave to consider of it. I own it will make great alterations in my schemes and prospects."

"Sir," said the prince, "I hesitated not an instant to make your daughter happy by my consent, and I knew not but I was contaminating my blood, in marrying him to the obscure offspring of some low amour, or to the orphan daughter of some peasant; but his choice was fixed, his happiness marked out, and I would not, by withholding my consent, that my son should have cause to curse the hour that gave him to his natural father, or by an unnatural act forfeit my right to that name. The earl had given his consent to the marriage before I claimed a prior right to the boy. I followed his example, and I trust you, on a short consideration, will do likewise."

"I allow that an alliance with the House of Gareci, would be highly flattering," said Orsato; "I know it is more powerful than the House of Sansavino, but I have my views, and cannot yet determine; I hoped, that in finding my daughter I should not have found a trouble."

"When," asked Prince Gareci, "may I expect an answer? Do not trifle with my son's life."

"In a day or two," replied the count.

As Imma's health and spirits sunk, Antonio endeavoured to preserve his; he was too ill to join his friends at table, yet a seat by the bed of Imma, gave him comfort, and with that he was indulged the greatest part of each day. Indeed Antonio and the little Pheneas, were the two objects which gave her most pleasure. The prince was happy to see his son remain so collected,

lected, and dreading each hour lest insanity should take place; but Father Basil thought that while they could keep hope alive in his breast, and he had free access to Imma's chamber, he would remain calm; but should a separation take place, all would soon be over. Imma grew worse, and the prince thought, for her sake, Orsato would soon consent to their union, and for that reason, he deferred demanding Orsato's answer, which he promised in two days.

Count Orsato constantly visited his daughter twice a day, and constantly found Antonio there.

"You are very attentive, sir," said he to Antonio, one day when he met him there.

"Yes, Count Orsato, the man who guards his dearest treasure, with all his power and might, cannot reproach himself

self if it should be forced from him by a stronger power."

"I hope, my Antonio," said Imma, taking his hand, and looking at her father, "that no power but death will separate us. Say, my father, for it is your's alone to decide: my fate is in your hands; I live or die as you bid."

"My child," said Orsato, "you are wandering; too much company hurts your head; be at ease, I will see you again in the evening."

He left the room. Imma, after a deep groan, fainted. Metella, all rage at Orsato's unfeeling behaviour, and alarmed at Imma's fainting, opened the door, and screamed most violently. It was heard by all in the house, and Imma's chamber was filled in an instant. Count Orsato returned, and threw himself by the side of his daughter. Metella's

tella's screams, among the rest, drew the strange lady to Imma's chamber. All nervous and shaking, she pressed forward to the bed-side, desiring, in a loud tone of voice, to know what was the matter. The sounds caught Count Orsato's ears; he looked up; then hid his face; roared out "A ghost! a ghost! The spirit of your mother, my Imma, is come to rebuke me!" "O, Lord! O, Saint Michael defend me," cried Ursula; "a ghost in the middle of the day. I never before heard of such a thing. O, Leolin, protect me! As sure as the Witch of Ender raised the ghost of Samuel, the wicked abbé has sent it. O! dear, where shall I go?" "Come here, Ursula," said Leolin, creeping under the bed. Ursula followed, but stuck by the way, and like a frightened ass, she cared not for her posteriors, so her head was in the dark. "A ghost!" exclaimed every one, and looked round.

Metella, with the rest, when seeing the strange lady, she screamed ten thousand times louder than at first. "A ghost, indeed. Oh! Cassandra, oh! my murdered mistress," then sunk with fright on a chair. Leolin hearing ghost and murder, he began to bellow out murder, with all his might; and Lord Linton, in assisting Count Orsato off the bed, kicked Ursula's most prominent parts:—"Murder," reiterated she, as loud as she could bawl.

"Metella," said Cassandra, for so the strange lady proved to be, "I am no ghost; but say do I hope in vain, or is this my Imma, with whom I have so often conversed, and always admired? Is she my Imma, my dear child? Tell me, Metella."

"Yes, my dear, my long lost mistress, she is your Imma, nor has she ever been from me since you left her at Amalfi, till a few months since; and

my

my dear mistress, here is Count Orsato, your husband!"

"Where? Where?" exclaimed Cassandra. She turned round, he clasped her in his arms.

This sudden and unexpected meeting was painful to both; nor were the feelings of all present uninterested. When their tumultuous feelings had subsided, and they were well assured of the reality of each other's existence, they turned to Imma, who recovered from her fainting during the tumult, and viewed, more dead than alive, the passing scene.

"My dear Imma," said Orsato, "embrace your mother, who is most miraculously sent to us."

Cassandra kissed Imma tenderly, and expressed the sincerest sorrow at finding her so ill.

"Ah! my dear mother," said Imma, "it is, I trust, in your power, to give

health to my frame, and peace to my breast."

"And how, my daughter, my child? Point out the way," said Cassandra.

Imma took Antonio's hand, and pointing to Prince Gareci, faintly said, "He will tell you."

At Father Basil's request, they all left the room but Antonio and Metella, for he saw that the late bustle and wonderful events, which had taken place so fast, one on the other, were too much for her weakened frame.

"And what have we here?" said Metella, as she looked towards the bed, and saw Ursula's unprotected parts protapse the curtain, "what have we here?" repeated Metella, and she kicked her:—"Have mercy," cried Ursula, "it is I."—"I! And what do you do there."

"Is the ghost gone? good Metella."

"Gone!

"Gone! yes. You may come out."

Out backed Ursula, and as she raised herself on her knees, she returned thanks to her guardian saint, that she did not see the ghost.

"And was it the ghost of your poor murdered mistress?"

"You heard me say so; and if ever I saw my mistress in my life, she entered the room when Count Orsato called ghost."

"O Lord! O Lord!" roared out Leolin, as he poaked his head from under the bed, fully ornamented with fine white down; "I hope my master will have it laid in the Red Sea; I shall never be able to go about the house, if she is not lain. Old Mildred's ghost frightened me into a fever, and I was obliged to leave my place—and from your murdered mistress, Metella, holy Stephen defend me."

Leolin, creeping from under the bed,

his broad face pale with fear, his strong stout limbs trembling, with his dusty honours hanging thickly about him, so diverted Antonio, that, weak and low-spirited as he was, he laughed most heartily, which a little disconcerted Leolin; but fear overcame shame, and he, with great gallantry, pushed Ursula out of the room first, and followed close behind, putting one hand over his eyes, and holding her gown with the other.

The last few months had teemed with events so strange and unexpected, every thing round wore so much the face of romance, that they began to doubt their reality; each felt a strong desire to know by what means Cassandra and Orsato had been separated, and kept from each other and the world for so long a time; but none could bring their minds to a settled state, or rest their attentions on one object long enough:

enough to attend: nor could either Cassandra or Orsato methodise the accounts they had to give, so continually did their thoughts revert from their present happiness to their past sufferings, then to the sick-bed of their daughter; there they hung with tender fear, which cast doubts and gloom over their brightening prospects.

Cassandra having heard from the countess the whole of Imma's sufferings, undertook to prevail on Orsato to consent to their marriage; but in vain did she plead Imma's cause; he was inexorable; and to the great grief of all, he gave a peremptory refusal.

"Then," said Prince Gareci, clasping his hands in an agony, "my boy's death is certain, it is inevitable."

"And I," said Father Basil, "do pronounce that Imma cannot live."

"Son Orsato," said Father Alberti, "and will you thus idly, thus wan-

tonly, throw away a life I have so many years preserved? Is it thus you value blessings so great and so lately bestowed? Is it thus you repay our care and trouble? Is this your gratitude to Heaven and us? Murder your child! and not only your child, but the child of another will fall by the same blow!— Son, it shall not be. Think not that you have full power over her; the church has some, and shall exert it.— I will go myself to his Holiness, and state the melancholy case of my darling girl, and he shall demand her.— Heaven knows the pain and sickness I endured; the many months heart-ache I suffered, when she was taken away from Amalfi, but I forgive the youth; most sincerely do I forgive him; love was the cause of his crime, but it was a love pure as my own. He respected the maid's honour, and he shall be rewarded. I swear! (and the good man lifted

up

up his hands and eyes to heaven) I swear by my Great Master he shall be rewarded."

"Brother Alberti, give me thy hand; I will bear testimony to the necessity of the marriage, and our abbot will put his hand to the petition, and what is done, must be done quickly," said Father Basil.

"It shall, my brother. To-morrow's sun shall light me to the bed-side of my child, to take my farewell, and it shall leave me pressing forward to Rome; nor will I sleep until I see his Holiness."

"I," said the earl, "will order my carriage, and accompany you."

"I accept your offer kindly, my son; your presence will have great weight."

Father Alberti arose, and leaving his benediction with the company, retired.

Cassandra again resumed her entreaties;

ties; she was joined by all the company present, but to them he made not the least answer; he sat silent and thoughtful, until there was a general move to retire for the night. Cassandra, as they were going to their chamber, first led the Count Orsato to Imma's, where they found Lady Maria and Lord Stellor.

"Look, my dear Orsato," said Cassandra, "at our fading cherub," as she drew the curtain on one side; "look, and recollect the joy you felt when first she opened her eyes; when she stretched out her little hands, as imploring our care. Remember, Orsato, those pleasures, and the blessings you called on me for giving you such a child; they still dwell on my ears. And can you cruelly devote this child to death? Lost to us for seventeen years, and lost to each other as long, now found but a few days, and found in all the bloom of beauty;

beauty; found rich in every mental accomplishment, adorned with every bright intellectual jewel a father can wish a child to possess; and can you throw such a gem away, when by preserving her life, you will preserve the life of an only son, and form an alliance with a house superior to your own?"

"My dear Cassandra," said Orsato, "say no more; be assured I love my daughter, and would save her life, and make that life happy, was it in my power."

Lady Maria, who was melted in tears at Cassandra's expostulation, sunk on her knees, and clasping Orsato's, said,

"Let me, count, add my entreaties, let me plead for my brother, at least for one I love as a brother."

"Rise, madam," said Orsato, I beg, "and be assured what I can do I will."

"That is a promise," returned Lady Maria,

Maria, "for we all know what we ask is in your power to perform."

After kissing Imma's cheek, which was moist with tears, Cassandra and Orsato retired, as did Lady Maria, after warmly embracing her friend, and begging her to rely on Orsato's last promise.

Imma was left to the care of Metella and Agatha. She passed the first part of the night in almost frantic ravings; when her mind, tortured on the rock of suspense and despair, her strength exhausted, and her disorder increased, she fell in a fit, at first feebly struggling, then motionless, her hands clenched, and each limb stretched out. Metella's fears ran high; all caution forsook her, she flew out of the room, and with the most piercing screams, awakened the whole house. Cassandra and Orsato were the first in the room, Father Basil followed, then Lady Maria; Antonio,

Antonio, Lord Linton, the earl, countess, Prince Gareci, M. Kenelm, his lady and son, all crowded into Imma's room.

"She is dead!" cried Metella, wringing her hands; "she is dead!"

"O! the darling of my soul! the joy of my life, dead!" groaned Count Antonio, and left the room, followed by Agatha, who insisted she was not dead.

"Now, Orsato," said Cassandra, "you have done your worst. 'Was it only to behold this cruel act of your's, that I have been preserved? Was it only to witness the death of my child, that I struggled against cruelties, sufficient to deprive me of existence?—Detested man, more barbarous than your brother—Cassandra stops not long after her dear child, her Imma."

She, in the deepest despair, left the room. Father Basil requested there might

might be no noise. He saw symptoms of life, and hoped the best. Madam Kenelm returned to her room to complete her dress, as she determined not to go to bed again, but visit her despairing friend. She rung her bell for Ursula; no Ursula came. She then went to her room, and found her hid under the bed-clothes.

"Why, Ursula," demanded Madam Kenelm, in an angry tone, "did you not answer my bell? Get up, I want you."

"O, the ghost! Holy Agnes defend me! Madam, how could I come? Has not the ghost been running all over the house? As sure as Elijah was carried up to heaven, the ghost would have flown away with me."

"Foolish girl, get up; I will hear no such nonsense. Ghost, indeed—stuff—There is no such thing."

"O, dear! do not say so, madam, or she will come screaming into the room,

room, and scratch our eyes out. I dare say the wicked abbé sent her. Metella says it is her murdered mistress. God forgive him! I suppose he murdered her. I wish I had not taken the cup and spoons away: he is in anger and spite with me."

"Make haste, and do not chatter so," said her mistress, while the trembling Ursula was huddling on her clothes. M. Kenelm had rung his bell also to no purpose for Leolin, and, like his lady, was obliged to go to his room.

"Leolin," said he, opening the door, "get up, and come to my study."

"O Lord! O Lord, sir! How can I? The ghost, the ghost! I saw the bleeding ghost—she came, she came, and screamed in my ears. Oh, holy Stephen, protect me from her!"

"You great fool, get up: I wish she had you in her arms!"

"Oh,

"Oh, for heaven's sake, master, say not so, or she will come. O Lord! O Lord! Pray have her lain in the Red Sea, or poor Leolin cannot go about the house to do his work."

"Then lay there," replied M. Kenelm, "you doalt, you fearful ass!"—And meeting with a footman, whom the noise had roused, he ordered him to attend in his dressing-room.

While Father Basil was employing every means in his power to recal the fleeting sparks of life. Father Alberti both remonstrated and upbraided the Count Orsato, who at last melted to an unmanly softness, and begged Father Alberti's private ear. He retired with him to another room; and Metella, anxious to know if the conference would prove to the happiness of Imma, frequently listened: nothing could she hear distinctly, but the last sentence of Father Alberti, as he moved towards

wards the door—"Son, be at peace: the church will absolve your vow."

"Vow!" said Metella to herself: "now would I give my silver heart-box, which I vowed to offer as an ex-vato for Imma's recovery, to know what vow the count has made."

They returned to Imma's room, and found her supported by Lady Maria, supping a cordial draught, which the aged hand of Father Basil was holding to her lips.

"My dear lady," said the Count Orsato, "whisper to your dying friend her father consents to make her happy. Bid her live for him and Antonio: returning health shall crown their nuptials."

Imma moved her languid eyes towards her father, as if to thank him. Orsato, with Father Alberti, went to Count Antonio's room, whom they found lying across the bed, and his father

father on one side weeping over him, and Agatha on the other.

"I come," said Orsato, "the messenger of peace and happiness to Antonio: Emma lives, and lives for him alone!"

"Blessed tidings!" said Antonio, lifting up his head: "And do I hear them from Count Orsato—from her father?"

"Yes, my son! rise, and let me lead you to her; let me have the pleasure of binding my promise, by giving her your hand."

"To what," asked the prince, "do we owe this sudden change?"

"To the counsels of that good man," said Orsato, pointing to Father Alberti.

"Accept," said Prince Gareci, "the thanks of a father, happy by your interference."

He then assisted his son to rise from

the bed, and walk to Imma's room: the scene was affecting and tender; each sincerely enjoyed the prospect of returning happiness; and as soon as the hurried spirits of Imma and Antonio were in some degree calm, Orsato flew to inform his dear Cassandra of what had passed, as did Lady Maria to inform her mother.

Cassandra's joy was excessive; she embraced her husband with grateful love; then hastened to Imma's chamber to bless her children.

The rapidity of Imma's recovery was incredible, and Antonio, as a wheel of the same machine, moved but as she did. As the barometer is affected by the weight of the air, so was Antonio by the state of Imma's health: was she well—he was so: did she complain—he was unhappy. Scarce had two weeks elapsed, when Imma and Antonio joined the family at table, and never,

never, perhaps, were fifteen persons at one table so serenely happy; every thing appeared to glide on agreeable to their wishes, and nothing was talked of but preparations for the approaching wedding. The two fathers seemed to endeavour to out-vie each other in love and munificence to their children; and there was much difficulty in fixing on a residence for them. At length Cassandra proposed, that their winters should be spent at Tarento with them, and that the prince's company would be an added pleasure; their summers, where the prince and Count Antonio pleased. To this proposal the prince agreed, saying, he hoped that a tender and an affectionate intercourse would ever subsist between the families.

While matters were in this happy way, Sir George Philomath returned, whom Cassandra, in her successions of pleasure and pain, had quite forgot.

Sir

Sir George was agreeably surprised to find Father Alberti there, who introduced Count Orsato Sansovino to him as Imma's father; "And," said Cassandra, rising and presenting him again, "my husband, Sir George."

"Is it possible!" said he; "I felicitate you on your good fortune, countess; and your amandation is of no use. I waited a week after I delivered your letter for an answer: the lady was not in good health when I presented it: she was mourning the death of a new friend, and the adscitious sorrow your letter conveyed confined her to her bed. I was honoured with a seat by her bed-side several mornings, and with me she discoursed on the injustice and cruelty you had suffered, and said, she had long thought you dead, as she had some years ago written several letters, and none were answered. She then consulted on the

steps most advisable to be taken in order to claim your estate. The poor lady is in a bad way; she is an atrabilarian to a great degree, and I always found myself affected at every visit. I was often thrown into a very awkward situation when with her; sometimes she was suddenly seized with an obumtescence; then she would point at this and that, and distort her features in a thousand frightful forms. Another time she would be deprived of all reminiscence; and then a sudden pause in our conversation would take place, or she would continue to utter words so heterogeneous to the subject, that I sometimes thought a dementation had taken place.—But, countess, there is her letter, and I am supremely happy you do not need her assistance; but let me beg of you to write to the baroness, that Count Orsato Sansovino is returned, and that you have found

your

your daughter, for your troubles prey on her health."

Cassandra returned Sir George many thanks for his trouble, and promised to inform the Baroness Stenkoff of her good fortune the next day.

Count Antonio, impressed with a fear that some unforeseen impediment to his marriage with Imma might again take place, requested the Countess of Cleobright to prevail on Imma to consent, that an early day might be named to complete his happiness.

Imma, when her own troubles were dispelled and forgotten, in the affectionate tenderness of her parents, and the endearing attentions of Count Antonio and her friends, found room in her bosom for the distresses of Theresa, and declared to the countess, that her happiness would be incomplete if Theresa did not witness the ceremony, which gave her to the love, care, and

protection, of the man her heart owns as its master. The count, unable to oppose her wishes, consented to postpone the wished-for day one month longer; for, according to Father Basil's calculation, Theresa might be expected by that time.

To beguile the lagging hours of the long winter evenings, Cassandra and Orsato promised to relate the events of the last sixteen years of their lives. Each of the party had long felt a strong desire to know by what means they had so long been separated from each other; but so distressed had each mind been employed, and so interested in the cause of Imma and Antonio, that neither time nor attention offered.

Here, as in most civilized countries, the females take precedence of the males in all ceremonious trifles, though perhaps, in the more momentous concerns of life, they are placed too far in

in the back ground: so Cassandra's tale preceded Orsato's.

Think you not, my fair readers! that this ceremonious preference shewn to us by the other sex, is figurative of their feelings? I do believe they feel and know the pre-eminence given to us by Nature, and nothing but a jealous fear prevents their benefiting by our abilities; and most men of penetration and discernment have a far higher opinion of women in general, than they are willing to acknowledge. So says vanity. No, my fair friends! vanity is out of the question; for I may be one of the many, whose abilities are unnoticed, or do not rise above mediocrity. I speak from observation, and observations made in different nations and kingdoms; and I have always found the more civilized, enlightened, and refined the men were, the more honour, respect, and deference, they

paid to the women; and when a man treats a woman with neglect, or rudeness, or utters coarse language and oaths in her presence, be assured he is either deficient in sense or education. But to Cassandra's story.

END OF VOL. II.

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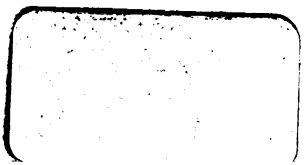
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